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Forty Singing Seamen

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.**

# Forty Singing Seamen

And Other Poems

BY

ALFRED NOYES

//

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MCMVII

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MR





*TO*  
*GARNETT.*

My acknowledgments are due to the Editors of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' 'The Fortnightly Review,' 'The Spectator,' 'The Bookman,' 'The Speaker,' 'The Nation,' 'The Outlook,' and 'Country Life'; also to the Editors of 'The Standard' and 'The Daily Mail Literary Supplement,' for permission to reprint some of the following poems. A few have appeared in book form in America, and are now published in this country for the first time. Others are quite new.

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# POEMS.



## THE EMPIRE BUILDERS.

Who are the Empire-builders? They  
Whose desperate arrogance demands  
A self-reflecting power to sway  
A hundred little selfless lands?  
Lord God of battles, ere we bow  
To these and to their soulless lust,  
Let fall Thy thunders on us now  
And strike us equal to the dust.

Before the stars in heaven were made  
Our great Commander led us forth;  
And now the embattled lines are laid  
To East, to West, to South, to North;

## THE EMPIRE BUILDERS.

According as of old He planned  
    We take our station in the field,  
Nor dare to dream we understand  
    The splendour of the swords we wield.

We know not what the Soul intends  
    That lives and moves behind our deeds ;  
We wheel and march to glorious ends  
    Beyond the common soldier's needs :  
And some are raised to high rewards,  
    And some by regiments are hurled  
To die upon the opposing swords  
    And sleep—forgotten by the world.

And not where navies churn the foam,  
    Nor called to fields of fierce emprise,  
In many a country cottage-home  
    The Empire-builder lives and dies :  
Or through the roaring street he goes  
    A lean and weary City slave,  
The conqueror of a thousand foes  
    Who walks, unheeded, to his grave.

Leaders unknown of hopes forlorn  
    Go past us in the daily mart,  
With many a shadowy crown of thorn  
    And many a kingly broken heart :

Though England's banner overhead  
Ever the secret signal flew,  
We only see its Cross is red  
As children see the skies are blue.

For all are Empire-builders here,  
Whose hearts are true to heaven and home  
And, year by slow revolving year,  
Fulfil the duties as they come ;  
So simple seems the task, and yet  
Many for this are crucified ;  
Ay, and their brother-men forget  
The simple wounds in palm and side.

But he that to his home is true,  
Where'er the tides of power may flow,  
Has built a kingdom great and new  
Which Time nor Fate shall overthrow ;  
These are the Empire-builders, these  
Annex where none shall say them nay  
Beyond the world's uncharted seas,  
Realms that can never pass away.

## NELSON'S YEAR.

(1905.)

## I.

“NEW YEAR, be good to England!”

This year, a hundred years ago,  
The world attended, breathless, on the gathering pomp  
of war,

While England and her deathless dead, with all their  
mighty hearts aglow,  
Swept onward like the dawn of doom to triumph at  
Trafalgar ;

Then the world was hushed to wonder  
As the cannon's dying thunder  
Broke out again in muffled peals across the heaving sea,  
And home the Victor came at last,  
Home, home, with England's flag half-mast,  
That never dipped to foe before, on Nelson's Victory.



## II.

God gave this year to England ;  
And what God gives He takes again ;  
God gives us life, God gives us death : our victories  
have wings ;  
He gives us love and in its heart He hides the whole  
world's heart of pain :  
We gain by loss : impartially the eternal balance swings !  
Ay ; in the fire we cherish  
Our thoughts and dreams may perish ;  
Yet shall it burn for England's sake triumphant as of old !  
What sacrifice could gain for her  
Our own shall still maintain for her,  
And hold the gates of Freedom wide that take no keys  
of gold.

## III.

God gave this year to England ;  
Her eyes are far too bright for tears  
Of sorrow ; by her silent dead she kneels, too proud for  
pride ;  
Their blood, their love, have bought her right to claim  
the new imperial years  
In England's name for Freedom, in whose love her  
children died ;

In whose love, though hope may dwindle,  
 Love and brotherhood shall kindle  
 Between the striving nations as a choral song takes  
 fire,  
 Till new hope, new faith, new wonder  
 Cleave the clouds of doubt asunder,  
 And speed the union of mankind in one divine desire.

## IV.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;  
 This year across the listening world  
 There came a sound of mingled tears where victory and  
 defeat  
 Clasped hands ; and Peace—among the dead—stood  
 wistfully, with white wings furled,  
 Knowing the strife was idle ; for the night and morning  
 meet,  
 Yet there is no disunion  
 In heaven's divine communion  
 As through the gates of twilight the harmonious morning  
 pours ;  
 Ah, God speed that grander morrow  
 When the world's divinest sorrow  
 Shall show how Love stands knocking at the world's  
 unopened doors.

## v.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;  
    Look up across the narrow seas,  
Across the great white nations to thy dark imperial  
    throne  
    Where now three hundred million souls attend on  
    thine august decrees ;  
Ah, bow thine head in humbleness, the Kingdom is  
    thine own :  
    Not for the pride or power  
    God gave thee this in dower ;  
But, now the West and East have met and wept their  
    mortal loss,  
    Now that their tears have spoken  
    And the long dumb spell is broken,  
Is it nothing that thy banner bears the red eternal cross ?

## vi.

Ay! Lift the flag of England ;  
    And lo, that Eastern cross is there,  
Veiled with a hundred meanings as our English eyes are  
    veiled ;  
    Yet to the grander dawn we move oblivious of the  
    sign we bear,  
Oblivious of the heights we climb until the last is scaled ;

Then with all the earth before us  
And the great cross floating o'er us  
We shall break the sword we forged of old, so weak we  
were and blind ;  
While the inviolate heaven discloses  
England's Rose of all the roses  
Dawning wide and ever wider o'er the kingdom of  
mankind.

## VII.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;  
For then all nations shall be one ;  
One as the ordered stars are one that sing upon their  
way,  
One with the rhythmic glories of the swinging sea and  
the rolling sun,  
One with the flow of life and death, the tides of night  
and day ;  
One with all dreams of beauty,  
One with all laws of duty ;  
One with the weak and helpless while the one sky burns  
above ;  
Till eyes by tears made glorious  
Look up at last victorious,  
And lips that starved break open in one song of life and  
love.

## VIII.

New Year, be good to England ;  
    And when the Spring returns again  
Rekindle in our English hearts the universal Spring,  
    That we may wait in faith upon the former and the  
    latter rain,  
Till all waste places burgeon and the wildernesses sing ;  
    Pour the glory of thy pity  
    Through the dark and troubled city ;  
Pour the splendour of thy beauty over wood and meadow  
fair ;  
    May the God of battles guide thee  
    And the Christ-child walk beside thee  
With a word of peace for England in the dawn of  
Nelson's Year.

## IN TIME OF WAR.

## I.

TO-NIGHT o'er Bagshot heath the purple heather  
Rolls like dumb thunder to the splendid West ;  
And mighty ragged clouds are massed together  
Above the scarred old common's broken breast ;

And there are hints of blood between the boulders,  
Red glints of fiercer blossom, bright and bold ;  
And round the shaggy mounds and sullen shoulders  
The gorse repays the sun with savage gold.

And now, as in the West the light grows holy,  
And all the hollows of the heath grow dim,  
Far off, a sulky rumble rolls up slowly  
Where guns at practice growl their evening hymn.

And here and there in bare clean yellow spaces  
The print of horse-hoofs like an answering cry  
Strikes strangely on the sense from lonely places  
Where there is nought but empty heath and sky.

The print of warlike hoofs, where now no figure  
Of horse or man along the sky's red rim  
Breaks on the low horizon's rough black rigour  
To make the gorgeous waste less wild and grim ;

Strangely the hoof-prints strike, a Crusoe's wonder,  
Framed with sharp furze amongst the footless fells  
A menace and a mystery, rapt asunder,  
As if the whole wide world contained nought else,—

Nought but the grand despair of desolation  
Between us and that wild, how far, how near,  
Where, clothed with thunder, nation grapples nation,  
And Slaughter grips the clay-cold hand of Fear.

## II.

And far above the purple heath the sunset stars  
awaken,  
And ghostly hosts of cloud across the West begin to  
stream,  
And all the low soft winds with muffled cannonades are  
shaken,  
And all the blood-red blossom draws aloof into a  
dream ;

A dream—no more—and round the dream the clouds  
are curled together ;

A dream of two great stormy hosts embattled in the  
sky ;

For there against the low red heavens each purple clump  
of heather

Becomes a serried host of spears around a battle-  
cry ;

Becomes the distant battlefield or brings the dream so  
near it

That, almost, as the purple smoke around them reels  
and swims,

A thousand grey-lipped faces flash—ah, hark, the heart  
can hear it—

The sharp command, the clash of steel, the sudden  
sough of limbs.

And through the purple thunders there are silent shadows  
creeping

With murderous gleams of light, and then—a mighty  
leaping roar

Where foe and foe are met ; and then—a long low sound  
of weeping

As Death laughs out from sea to sea, another fight is  
o'er.



Another fight—but ah, how much is over? Night  
descending

Draws o'er the scene her ghastly moon-shot veil with  
piteous hands ;

But all around the bivouac-glare the shadowy pickets  
wending

See sights, hear sounds that only war's own madness  
understands.

No circle of the accursed dead where dreaming Dante  
wandered,

No city of death's eternal dole could match this  
mortal world

Where men, before the living soul and quivering flesh  
are sundered,

Through all the bestial shapes of pain to one wide  
grave are hurled.

But in the midst for those who dare beyond the fringe  
to enter

Be sure one kingly figure lies with pale and blood-  
soiled face,

And round his brows a ragged crown of thorns ; and in  
the centre

Of those pale folded hands and feet the sigil of his  
grace.

See, how the pale limbs, marred and scarred in love's  
lost battle, languish ;

See how the splendid passion still smiles quietly from  
his eyes :

Come, come and see a king indeed, who triumphs in his  
anguish,

Who conquers here in utter loss beneath the eternal  
skies.

For unto lips so deadly calm what answer shall be  
given ?

Oh pale, pale king so deadly still beneath the un-  
shaken stars,

Who shall deny thy kingdom here, though heaven and  
earth were riven

With the last roar of onset in the world's intestine  
wars ?

All round him reeks the obscene red hell—the scream  
of haggled horses,

The curse, the moan, the tossing arms, the hideous  
twisted forms,

Where, as the surgeons call up life's last pitiful resources,

The darkness heaves around them like a mass of  
mangled worms.

“Life, doctor, life !” “Be wise ; you’d better die : ’twill soon be over,”—

The blackened trunk drops guttering back, the mouth is dumb again :

“What use were life to you, my lad ? she wouldn’t know her lover,

And cruelty here is pity’s best—to put you out of pain.”

And far away in lonely homes the lamp of hope is burning,

All night the white-faced women wait with aching eyes of prayer,

All night the little children dream of father’s glad returning ;

All night he lies beneath the stars and—dreams no more out there.

Only the senseless clay-cold hand may clasp some crumpled letter,—

A lantern—see—the big round scrawl, the child’s long-studied phrase :

“When Dadda comes again . . . his girl will try so much much better :

She’ll be much taller, too ; and much more grown-up in her ways.”

The laugh is Death's ; he laughs as erst o'er hours that  
 England cherished,  
 "Count up, count up the stricken homes that wail  
 the firstborn son,  
 Count by your starved and fatherless the tale of what  
 hath perished ;  
 Then gather with your foes and ask if you—or I  
 —have won."

## III.

O'er Bagshot heath it rolls, the old old story,—  
 The great moon dawns ; the sunset dies away ;  
 Year strengthens year as glory kindles glory  
 From its own sad procession of decay.

When shall the sun-dawn of the perfect nation,  
 England, rise white above the blood-red sea ;  
 When shall war die and by death's new creation  
 Begin the long-sought world-wide harmony ?

Nearer, still nearer, creeps the light we hope for,  
 Yet still eludes our war-worn aching eyes :  
 Nearer, still nearer, steals the truth we grope for,  
 Yet, as we think to grasp it, fades and flies.

The world rolls on ; and love and peace are mated :  
Still on the breast of England, like a star,  
The blood-red lonely heath blows, consecrated,  
A brooding practice-ground for blood-red war.

Yet is there nothing out of tune with Nature  
There, where the skylark showers his earliest song,  
Where sun and wind have moulded every feature,  
And one world-music bears each note along.

There many a brown-winged kestrel swoops or hovers  
In poised and patient quest of his own prey ;  
And there are fern-clad glens where happy lovers  
May kiss the murmuring summer noon away.

There, as the primal earth was—all is glorious  
Perfect and wise and wonderful in view  
Of that great heaven through which we rise victorious  
O'er all that strife and change and death can do.

No nation yet has risen o'er earth's first nature ;  
Though love illumed each individual mind,  
Still, like some dark half-formed primeval creature  
The fierce mob crawled a thousand years behind.

Still on the standards of the great World-Powers  
Lion and bear and eagle sullenly brood,  
Whether the slow folds flap o'er halcyon hours  
Or stream tempestuously o'er fields of blood.

By war's red evolution we have risen  
Far, since fierce Erda chose her conquering few,  
And out of Death's red gates and Time's grey prison  
They burst, elect from battle, tried and true,

Tempered like sword-blades ; but life's vast procession  
Has passed beyond the help of war's wild day,  
The day where now a world in retrogression  
Goes hurrying down the broad and hopeless way.

For now Death mocks at youth and love and glory,  
Chivalry slinks behind his loaded mines,  
With meaner murderous lips War tells her story,  
And round her cunning brows no laurel shines.

And here to us the eternal charge is given  
To rise and make our low world touch God's high :  
To hasten God's own kingdom, Man's own heaven,  
And teach Love's grander army how to die.

No kingdom then, no long-continuing city  
Shall e'er again be stablished by the sword ;  
No blood-bought throne defy the powers of pity,  
No despot's crown outweigh one helot's word.

Imperial England, breathe thy marching orders :  
The great host waits ; the end, the end is close,  
When earth shall know thy peace in all her borders,  
And all her deserts blossom with thy Rose.

Princedom and peoples rise and flash and perish  
As the dew passes from the flowering thorn ;  
Yet the one Kingdom that our dreams still cherish  
Lives in a light that blinds the world's red morn.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, the days darken ;  
We would not have thee slacken watch or ward,  
Nor doff thine armour till the whole world hearken,  
Nor till Time bid thee lay aside the sword.

Hasten the Kingdom ; hamlet, heath, and city,  
We are all at war, one bleeding bulk of pain ;  
Little we know ; but one thing—by God's pity—  
We know, and know all else on earth is vain.

We know not yet how much we dare, how little ;  
 We dare not dream of peace ; yet, as at need,  
 England, God help thee, let no jot or tittle  
 Of Love's last law go past thee without heed.

*Who saves his life shall lose it !* The great ages  
 Bear witness—Rome and Babylon and Tyre  
 Cry from the dust-stopped lips of all their sages,—  
 There is no hope if man can climb no higher.

England, by God's grace set apart to ponder  
 A little while from battle, ah, take heed,  
 Keep watch, keep watch, beside thy sleeping thunder ;  
 Call down Christ's pity while those others bleed ;

Waken the God within thee, while the sorrow  
 Of battle surges round a distant shore,  
 While Time is thine, lest on some deadly morrow  
 The moving finger write—*but thine no more.*

Little we know—but though the advancing æons  
 Win every painful step by blood and fire,  
 Though tortured mouths must chant the world's great  
 pæans,  
 And martyred souls proclaim the world's desire ;



Though war be nature's engine of rejection,  
    Soon, soon, across her universal verge  
The great surviving host of Time's election  
    Shall into God's diviner light emerge.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, queen and mother ;  
    Little we know of all Time's works and ways ;  
Yet this, this, this is sure : we need none other  
    Knowledge or wisdom, hope or aim or praise,

But to keep this one stormy banner flying  
    In this one faith that none shall e'er disprove,  
Then drive the embattled world before thee, crying,  
    There is one Emperor, whose name is Love.

## TO ENGLAND IN 1907.

(A PRAYER THAT SHE MIGHT SPEAK FOR PEACE.)

Now is thy foot set on the splendid way :  
Hold this hour fast ! Though yet the skies be gray,  
Lift up thy voice to greet the perfect day,  
    Speak, England, speak across the trembling sea !

E'en now the grandest dawn that ever rose  
Has touched the clouds to glory : the light grows  
White as a star where thy keen helmet glows  
    Fronting the morn that makes all nations free.

Speak from thine island throne ! Here, in thy Gate,  
Now, for thy voice alone, the nations wait :  
Speak with the heart that made and keeps thee great,  
    Speak the great word of peace from sea to sea.

The nations wait, scarce knowing what they need :  
Cold cunning claims their ears for lust and greed !  
The poor and weak, with struggling hands that bleed,  
Pray to thee now that thou wilt set them free.

Thou that hast dared so many a thunder-blast,  
Is all thy vaunted empery so soon past ?  
First of the first, art thou afraid at last  
To hold thy hands out first across the sea ?

Not for such fears God gave thee thy rich dower,  
The sea-wrought sceptre and the imperial power !  
Ages have poured their blood for this one hour  
That thou mightst speak and set the whole world free.

The poor and weak uplift their manacled hands  
To thee, our Mother, our Lady and Queen of lands :  
Anguished in prayer before thy footstool stands  
Peace, with her white wings glimmering o'er the sea.

Others may shrink whose naked frontiers face  
A million foemen of an alien race ;  
But thou, Imperial, by thy pride of place  
O, canst thou falter or fear to set them free ?

Thou, thou alone canst speak ; thou, thou alone,  
From the sure citadel of thy rock-bound throne :  
Trust thy strong heart ; thine island is thine own,  
    Armed with the thunder and lightning of the sea.

Fools prate of pride where butchered legions fall ;  
Peace has one battle sterner than them all  
(England, on thee our ringing trumpets call !),  
    One battle that shall set the whole world free.

Speak, speak and act ! The sceptre is in thine hand ;  
Proclaim the reign of love from land to land ;  
Then come the world against thee, thou shalt stand !  
    Speak, with the world-wide voice of thine own sea.

## ODE FOR A SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

(IN HONOUR OF A. C. SWINBURNE.)

## I.

HE needs no crown of ours, whose golden heart  
 Poured out its wealth so freely in pure praise  
 Of others : him the imperishable bays  
 Crown, and on Sunium's height he sits apart :  
 He hears immortal greetings this great morn :  
 Fain would we bring, we also, all we may,  
 Some wayside flower of transitory bloom,  
 Frail tribute, only born  
 To greet the gladness of this April day  
 Then waste on death's dark wind its faint perfume.

## II.

Here on this April day the whole sweet Spring  
 Speaks thro' his music only, or seems to speak,  
 And we that hear, with hearts uplift and weak,  
 What can we more than claim him for our king ?

Here on this April day (and many a time  
 Shall April come and find him singing still)  
 He is one with the world's great heart beyond the  
     years,  
 One with the pulsing rhyme  
 Of tides that work some heavenly rhythmic will  
 And hold the secret of all human tears.

## III.

For he, the last of that immortal race  
 Whose music, like a robe of living light  
 Re-clothed each new-born age and made it bright  
 As with the glory of Love's transfiguring face,  
 Reddened earth's roses, kindled the deep blue  
 Of England's radiant, ever-singing sea,  
 Recalled the white Thalassian from the foam,  
 Woke the dim stars anew  
 And triumphed in the triumph of Liberty,  
 We claim him ; but he hath not here his home.

## IV.

Not here ; round him to-day the clouds divide :  
 We know what faces thro' that rose-flushed air  
 Now bend above him : Shelley's face is there,  
 And Hugo's, lit with more than kingly pride.

Replenished there with splendour, the blind eyes  
Of Milton bend from heaven to meet his own,  
Sappho is there, crowned with those queenlier flowers  
Whose graft outgrew our skies,  
His gift : Shakespeare leans earthward from his throne  
With hands outstretched. He needs no crown of  
ours.

## IN CLOAK OF GRAY.

## I.

LOVE'S a pilgrim, cloaked in gray,  
 And his feet are pierced and bleeding :  
 Have ye seen him pass this way  
 Sorrowfully pleading ?  
 Ye that weep the world away,  
 Have ye seen King Love to-day?—

## II.

Yea, we saw him ; but he came  
 Poppy-crowned and white of limb !  
 Song had touched his lips with flame,  
 And his eyes were drowsed and dim ;  
 And we kissed the hours away  
 Till night grew rosier than the day.—



## III.

Hath he left you?—yea, he left us  
A little while ago,  
Of his laughter quite bereft us  
And his limbs of snow ;  
We know not why he went away  
Who ruled our revels yesterday.—

## IV.

Because ye did not understand  
Love cometh from afar,  
A pilgrim out of Holy Land  
Guided by a star :  
Last night he came in cloak of gray,  
Begging. Ye knew him not : he went his way.

## A RIDE FOR THE QUEEN.

QUEEN of queens, oh lady mine,  
 You who say you love me,  
 Here's a cup of crimson wine  
 To the stars above me ;  
 Here's a cup of blood and gall  
 For a soldier's quaffing !  
 What's the prize to crown it all ?  
 Death? I'll take it laughing !  
 I ride for the Queen to-night !

Though I find no knightly fee  
 Waiting on my lealty,  
 High upon the gallows-tree  
 Faithful to my fealty,  
 What had I but love and youth,  
 Hope and fame in season ?  
 She has proved that more than truth  
 Glorifies her treason !

Would that other do as much ?  
Ah, but if in sorrow  
Some forgotten look or touch  
Pierce her heart to-morrow  
She might love me yet, I think ;  
So her lie befriends me,  
Though I know there's darker drink  
Down the road she sends me.

Ay, one more great chance is mine !  
(Can I faint or falter ?)  
She shall pour my blood like wine,  
Make my heart her altar,  
Burn it to the dust ! For, there,  
What if o'er the embers  
She should stoop and—I should hear—  
*“Hush ! Thy love remembers !”*

One more chance for every word  
Whispered to betray me,  
While she buckled on my sword  
Smiling to allay me ;  
One more chance ; ah, let me not  
Mar her perfect pleasure ;  
Love shall pay me, jot by jot,  
Measure for her measure.

Faith shall think I never knew,  
I will be so fervent !  
Doubt shall dream I dreamed her true,  
As her war-worn servant !  
Whoso flouts her spotless name  
(Love, I wear thy token !)  
He shall face one sword of flame  
Ere the lie be spoken !

God, the world is white with may,  
(Fragrant as her bosom !)  
Could I find a sweeter way  
Through the year's young blossom,  
Where her warm red mouth on mine  
Woke my soul's desire? . . .  
Hey ! The cup of crimson wine,  
Blood and gall and fire !

Castle Doom or Gates of Death ?  
(Smile again for pity !)  
"Boot and horse," my lady saith,  
"Spur against the City,  
Bear this message !" God and she  
Still forget the guerdon ;  
Nay, the rope is on the tree !  
That shall bear the burden !  
I ride for the Queen to-night !

## SONG.

## I.

WHEN that I loved a maiden  
My heaven was in her eyes,  
And when they bent above me  
I knew no deeper skies ;  
But when her heart forsook me  
My spirit broke its bars,  
For grief beyond the sunset  
And love beyond the stars.

## II.

When that I loved a maiden  
She seemed the world to me :  
Now is my soul the universe,  
My dreams the sky and sea :  
There is no heaven above me,  
No glory binds or bars  
My grief beyond the sunset,  
My love beyond the stars.

## III.

When that I loved a maiden  
I worshipped where she trod ;  
But, when she clove my heart, the cleft  
Set free the imprisoned god :  
Then was I king of all the world,  
My soul had burst its bars,  
For grief beyond the sunset  
And love beyond the stars.

## THE HIGHWAYMAN.

## PART ONE.

## I.

THE wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty  
trees,  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy  
seas,  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple  
moor,  
And the highwayman came riding—  
Riding—riding—  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

## II.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of  
lace at his chin,  
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown  
doe-skin ;

They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up  
to the thigh!  
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,  
His pistol butts a-twinkle,  
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

## III.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark  
inn-yard,  
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all  
was locked and barred;  
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should  
be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

## IV.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket  
creaked  
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white  
and peaked;



His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy  
hay,  
But he loved the landlord's daughter,  
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,  
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber  
say—

## v.

“One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize  
to-night,  
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the  
morning light ;  
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through  
the day,  
Then look for me by moonlight,  
Watch for me by moonlight,  
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should  
bar the way.”

## vi.

He rose upright in the stirrups ; he scarce could reach  
her hand,  
But she loosened her hair i' the casement ! His face  
burnt like a brand

As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over  
his breast ;  
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,  
    (Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight !)  
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and  
galloped away to the West.

## PART TWO.

## I.

He did not come in the dawning ; he did not come  
at noon ;  
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,  
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple  
moor,  
A red-coat troop came marching—  
    Marching—marching—  
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-  
door.

## II.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his  
ale instead,  
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the  
foot of her narrow bed ;

Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at  
their side!

There was death at every window;

And hell at one dark window;

For Bess could see, through her casement, the road  
that *he* would ride.

## III.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a  
sniggering jest;

They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel  
beneath her breast!

“Now keep good watch!” and they kissed her.

She heard the dead man say—

*Look for me by moonlight;*

*Watch for me by moonlight;*

*I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar  
the way!*

## IV.

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots  
held good!

She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with  
sweat or blood!

They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the  
hours crawled by like years,  
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,  
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,  
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least  
was hers!

## V.

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more  
for the rest!  
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath  
her breast,  
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive  
again;  
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;  
Blank and bare in the moonlight;  
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed  
to her love's refrain.

## VI.

*Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot!* Had they heard it? The horse-  
hoofs ringing clear;  
*Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot,* in the distance? Were they deaf that  
they did not hear?

Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the  
hill,  
The highwayman came riding,  
Riding, riding !  
The red-coats looked to their priming ! She stood up,  
straight and still !

## VII.

*Tlot-tlot*, in the frosty silence ! *Tlot-tlot*, in the echoing  
night !  
Nearer he came and nearer ! Her face was like a  
light !  
Her eyes grew wide for a moment ; she drew one last  
deep breath,  
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,  
Her musket shattered the moonlight,  
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him  
—with her death.

## VIII.

He turned ; he spurred to the Westward ; he did not  
know who stood  
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with  
her own red blood !

Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to  
 hear  
 How Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
     The landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
 Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in  
 the darkness there.

## IX.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to  
 the sky,  
 With the white road smoking behind him, and his  
 rapier brandished high !  
 Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon ; wine-red  
 was his velvet coat ;  
 When they shot him down on the highway,  
     Down like a dog on the highway,  
 And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch  
 of lace at his throat.

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*

## X.

*And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind  
 is in the trees,  
 When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy  
 seas,*

*When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple  
moor,*

*A highwayman comes riding—*

*Riding—riding— .*

*A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.*

## XI.

*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-  
yard ;*

*And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is  
locked and barred ;*

*He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be  
waiting there*

*But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,*

*Bess, the landlord's daughter,*

*Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*

## THE HAUNTED PALACE.

COME to the haunted palace of my dreams,  
     My crumbling palace by the eternal sea,  
 Which, like a childless mother, still must croon  
 Her ancient sorrows to the cold white moon,  
     Or, ebbing tremulously,  
 With one pale arm, where the long foam-fringe gleams,  
     Will gather her rustling garments, for a space  
     Of muffled weeping, round her dim white face.

A princess dwelt here once : long, long ago  
     This tower rose in the sunset like a prayer ;  
 And, through the witchery of that casement, rolled  
 In one soft cataract of faëry gold  
     Her wonder-woven hair ;  
 Her face leaned out and took the sacred glow  
     Of evening, like the star that listened, high  
     Above the gold clouds of the western sky.



Was there no prince behind her in the gloom,  
No crimson shadow of his rich array?  
Her face leaned down to me : I saw the tears  
Bleed through her eyes with the slow pain of years,  
And her mouth yearned to say—

“ Friend, is there any message, from the tomb  
Where love lies buried ? ” But she only said—  
“ Oh, friend, canst thou not save me from my dead ?

“ Canst thou not minister to a soul in pain ?  
Or hast thou then no comfortable word ?  
Is there no faith in thee wherewith to atone  
For his unfaith who left me here alone,  
Heart-sick with hope deferred ;  
Oh, since my love will never come again,  
Bring'st thou no respite through the desolate years,  
Respite from these most unavailing tears ? ”

Then saw I, and mine own tears made response,  
Her woman's heart come breaking through her eyes ;  
And, as I stood beneath the tower's grey wall,  
She let the soft waves of her deep hair fall  
Like flowers from Paradise  
Over my fevered face : then all at once  
Pity was passion ; and like a sea of bliss  
Those waves rolled o'er me drowning for her kiss.

\* \* \* \* \*

Seven years we dwelt together in that tower,  
Seven years in that old palace by the sea,  
And sitting at that casement, side by side,  
She told me all her pain : how love had died  
Now for all else but me ;  
Yet how she had loved that other : like a flower  
Her red lips parted and with low sweet moan  
She pressed their tender suffering on mine own.

And always with vague eyes she gazed afar,  
Out through the casement o'er the changing tide ;  
And slowly was my heart's hope brought to nought  
That some day I should win each wandering thought  
And make her my soul's bride :  
Still, still she gazed across the cold sea-bar ;  
Ay ; with her hand in mine, still, still and pale,  
Waited and watched for the unreturning sail.

And I, too, watched and waited as the years  
Rolled on ; and slowly was I brought to feel  
How on my lips she met her lover's kiss,  
How my heart's pulse begat an alien bliss ;  
And cold and hard as steel  
For me those eyes were, though their tender tears  
Were salt upon my cheek ; and then one night  
I saw a sail come through the pale moonlight.

And like an alien ghost I stole away,  
And like a breathing lover he returned ;  
And in the woods I dwelt, or sometimes crept  
Out in the grey dawn while the lovers slept  
And the great sea-tides yearned  
Against the iron shores ; and faint and grey  
The tower and the shut casement rose above :  
And on the earth I sobbed out all my love.

At last, one royal rose-hung night in June,  
When the warm air like purple Hippocrene  
Brimmed the dim valley and sparkled into stars,  
I saw them cross the foam-lit sandy bars  
And dark pools, glimmering green,  
To bathe beneath the honey-coloured moon :  
I saw them swim out from that summer shore,  
Kissed by the sea, but they returned no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

And into the dark palace, like a dream  
Remembered after long oblivious years,  
Through the strange open doors I crept and saw  
As some poor pagan might, with reverent awe,  
And deep adoring tears,  
The moonlight through that painted window stream  
Over the soft wave of their vacant bed ;  
There sank I on my knees and bowed my head,

For as a father by a cradle bows,  
 Remembering two dead children of his own,  
 I knelt ; and by the cry of the great deep  
 There love seemed like a murmuring in their sleep,  
 A little fevered moan,  
 A little tossing of childless arms that shows  
 How dreams go by ! “ If I were God,” I wept,  
 “ I would have pity on children while they slept.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The days, the months, the years drift over me ;  
 This is my habitation till I die :  
 Nothing is changed ; they left that open book  
 Beside the window. Did he sit and look  
 Up at her face as I  
 Looked while she read it, and the enchanted sea  
 With rich eternities of love unknown  
 Fulfilled the low sweet music of her tone ?

So did he listen, looking in her face ?  
 And did she ever pause, remembering so  
 The heart that bore the whole weight of her pain  
 Until her own heart's love returned again ?  
 In the still evening glow  
 I sit and listen in this quiet place,  
 And only hear—like notes of phantom birds—  
 Their perished kisses and little broken words.

*Come to the haunted palace of my dreams,  
My crumbling palace by the eternal sea,  
Which, like a childless mother, still must croon  
Her ancient sorrows to the cold white moon,  
Or, ebbing tremulously,  
With one pale arm, where the long foam-fringe gleams,  
Will gather her rustling garments, for a space  
Of muffled weeping, round her dim white face.*

## THE SCULPTOR.

THIS is my statue : cold and white  
It stands and takes the morning light !  
The world may flout my hopes and fears,  
Yet was my life's work washed with tears  
Of blood when this poor hand last night  
Finished the pain of years.

Speak for me, patient lips of stone,  
Blind eyes my lips have rested on  
So often when the o'er-weary brain  
Would grope to human love again,  
And found this grave cold mask alone  
And the tears fell like rain.

Ay; is this all? Is this the brow  
I fondled, never wondering how  
It lived—the face of pain and bliss  
That through the marble met my kiss?  
Oh, though the whole world praise it now,  
Let no man dream it is!

They blame ; they cannot blame aright  
Who never knew what infinite  
    Deep loss must shame me most of all !  
    They praise ; like earth their praises fall  
Into a tomb. The hour of light  
    Is flown beyond recall.

Yet have I seen, yet have I known,  
And oh, not tombed in cold white stone  
    The dream I lose on earth below ;  
    And I shall come with face aglow  
And find and claim it for my own  
    Before God's throne, I know.

## SUMMER.

(AN ODE.)

Now like a pageant of the Golden Year  
 In rich memorial pomp the hours go by,  
 With rose-embroidered flags unfurled  
 And tasselled bugles calling through the world  
 Wake, for your hope draws near !  
 Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,  
 Seen through each arch of pale green leaves, the Gate  
 Of Eden swings apart for Summer's royal state.

Ah, when the Spirit of the moving scene  
 Has entered in, the splendour will be spent !  
 The flutes will cease, the gates will close ;  
 Only the scattered crimson of the rose,  
 The wild wood's hapless queen,  
 Dis-kingdomed, will declare the way he went ;  
 And, in a little while, her court will go,  
 Pass like a cloud and leave no trace on earth below.



Tell us no more of Autumn, the slow gold

Of fruitage ripening in a world's decay,

The falling leaves, the moist rich breath

Of woods that swoon and crumble into death

Over the gorgeous mould :

Give us the flash and scent of keen-edged may

Where wastes that bear no harvest yield their bloom,

Rude crofts of flowering nettle, bents of yellow  
broom.

The very reeds and sedges of the fen

Open their hearts and blossom to the sky ;

The wild thyme on the mountain's knees

Unrolls its purple market to the bees ;

Unharvested of men

The Traveller's Joy can only smile and die.

Joy, joy alone the throbbing whitethroats bring,

Joy to themselves and heaven ! They were but born  
to sing !

And see, between the northern-scented pines,

The whole sweet summer sharpens to a glow !

See, as the well-spring plashes cool

Over a shadowy green fern-fretted pool

The mystic sunbeam shines

For one mad moment on a breast of snow

A warm white shoulder and a glowing arm  
Up-flung, where some swift Undine sinks in shy  
alarm.

And if she were not all a dream, and lent  
Life for a little to your own desire,  
Oh, lover in the hawthorn lane,  
Dream not you hold her, or you dream in vain !  
The violet, spray-besprent  
When from that plunge the rainbows flashed like fire,  
Will scarce more swiftly lose its happy dew  
Than eyes which Undine haunts will cease to shine  
on you.

What though the throstle pour his heart away,  
A happy spendthrift of uncounted gold,  
Swinging upon a blossomed briar  
With soft throat lifted in a wild desire  
To make the world his may.  
Ever the pageant through the gates is rolled  
Further away ; in vain the rich notes throng  
Flooding the mellow noon with wave on wave of  
song.

The feathery meadows like a lilac sea,  
Knee-deep, with honeyed clover, red and white,

Roll billowing : the crisp clouds pass  
Trailing their soft blue shadows o'er the grass ;  
    The skylark, mad with glee,  
Quivers, up, up, to lose himself in light ;  
    And, through the forest, like a fairy dream  
    Through some dark mind, the ferns in branching  
    beauty stream.

Enough of joy ! A little respite lend,  
    Summer, fair god that hast so little heed  
Of these that serve thee but to die,  
Mere trappings of thy tragic pageantry !  
    Show us the end, the end !  
We too, with human hearts that break and bleed,  
    March to the night that rounds their fleeting hour,  
    And feel we, too, perchance but serve some loftier  
    Power.

Oh that our hearts might pass away with thee,  
    Burning and pierced and full of thy sweet pain,  
Burst through the gates with thy swift soul,  
Hunt thy most white perfection to the goal,  
    Nor wait, once more to see  
Thy chalice d lilies rotting in the rain,  
    Thy ragged yellowing banners idly hung  
    In woods that have forgotten all the songs we sung !

*Peace! Like a pageant of the Golden Year  
In rich memorial pomp the hours go by,  
With rose-embroidered flags unfurled  
And tasselled bugles calling through the world  
Wake, for your hope draws near!  
Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,  
Seen through each arch of pale green leaves, the Gate  
Of Eden swings apart for Summer's royal state.*

Not wait! Forgive, forgive that feeble cry  
Of blinded passion all unworthy thee!  
For here the spirit of man may claim  
A loftier vision and a nobler aim  
Than e'er was born to die:  
Man only, of earth, throned on Eternity,  
From his own sure abiding-place can mark  
How earth's great golden dreams go past into the  
dark.

## AT DAWN.

O HESPER-PHOSPHOR, far away

Shining, the first, the last white star,  
Hear'st thou the strange, the ghostly cry,  
That moan of an ancient agony  
From purple forest to golden sky

Shivering over the breathless bay?

It is not the wind that wakes with the day ;

For see, the gulls that wheel and call,

Beyond the tumbling white-topped bar,

Catching the sun-dawn on their wings,

Like snow-flakes or like rose-leaves fall,

Flutter and fall in airy rings ;

And drift, like lilies ruffling into blossom

Upon some golden lake's unwrinkled bosom.

Are not the forest's deep-lashed fringes wet

With tears? Is not the voice of all regret

Breaking out of the dark earth's heart?

She too, she too, has loved and lost ; and we—  
We that remember our lost Arcady,  
Have we not known, we too,  
The primal greenwood's arch of blue,  
The radiant clouds at sun-rise curled  
Around the brows of the golden world ;  
The marble temples, washed with dew,  
To which with rosy limbs aflame  
The violet-eyed Thalassian came,  
Came, pitiless, only to display  
How soon the youthful splendour dies away ;  
    Came, only to depart  
Laughing across the grey-grown bitter sea ;  
For each man's life is earth's epitome,  
And though the years bring more than aught they  
    take,  
Yet might his heart and hers well break  
Remembering how one prayer must still be vain,  
    How one fair hope is dead,  
    One passion quenched, one glory fled  
With those first loves that never come again.

How many years, how many generations,  
    Have heard that sigh in the dawn,  
When the dark earth yearns to the unforgotten nations  
    And the old loves withdrawn,

Old loves, old lovers, wonderful and unnumbered  
As waves on the wine-dark sea,  
'Neath the tall white towers of Troy and the temples  
that slumbered  
In Thessaly?

From the beautiful palaces, from the miraculous portals,  
The swift white feet are flown!  
They were taintless of dust, the proud, the peerless  
Immortals  
As they sped to their loftier throne!  
Perchance they are there, earth dreams, on the shores  
of Hesper,  
Her rosy-bosomed Hours,  
Listening the wild fresh forest's enchanted whisper,  
Crowned with its new strange flowers;  
Listening the great new ocean's triumphant thunder  
On the stainless unknown shore,  
While that perilous queen of the world's delight and  
wonder  
Comes white from the foam once more.

When the mists divide with the dawn o'er those  
glittering waters,  
Do they gaze over unoared seas—  
Naiad and nymph and the woodland's rose-crowned  
daughters  
And the Oceanides?

Do they sing together, perchance, in that diamond  
splendour,  
That world of dawn and dew,  
With eyelids twitching to tears and with eyes grown  
tender  
The sweet old songs they knew,  
The songs of Greece? Ah, with harp-strings mute  
do they falter  
As the earth like a small star pales?  
When the heroes launch their ship by the smoking altar  
Does a memory lure their sails?  
Far, far away, do their hearts resume the story  
That never on earth was told,  
When all those urgent oars on the waste of glory  
Cast up its gold?

*Are not the forest fringes wet  
With tears? Is not the voice of all regret  
Breaking out of the dark earth's heart?  
She too, she too, has loved and lost; and though  
She turned last night in disdain  
Away from the sunset-embers,  
From her soul she can never depart;  
She can never depart from her pain.  
Vainly she strives to forget;  
Beautiful in her woe,  
She awakes in the dawn and remembers.*



## THE SWIMMERS' RACE.

## I.

BETWEEN the clover and the trembling sea  
 They stand upon the golden-shadowed shore  
 In naked boyish beauty, a strenuous three,  
 Hearing the breakers' deep Olympic roar ;  
 Three young athletes poised on a forward limb,  
 Mirrored like marble in the smooth wet sand,  
 Three statues moulded by Praxiteles :  
     The blue horizon rim  
 Recedes, recedes upon a lovelier land,  
 And England melts into the skies of Greece.

## II.

The dome of heaven is like one drop of dew,  
 Quivering and clear and cloudless but for one  
 Crisp bouldered Alpine range that blinds the blue  
 With snowy gorges glittering to the sun :

Forward the runners lean, with outstretched hand  
Waiting the word—ah, how the light relieves  
The silken rippling muscles as they start  
Spurning the yellow sand,  
Then skimming lightlier till the goal receives  
The winner, head thrown back and lips apart.

## III.

Now at the sea-marge on the sand they lie  
At rest for a moment, panting as they breathe,  
And gazing upward at the unbounded sky  
While the sand nestles round them from beneath ;  
And in their hands they gather up the gold  
And through their fingers let it lazily stream  
Over them, dusking all their limbs' fair white,  
Blotting their shape and mould,  
Till, mixed into the distant gazer's dream  
Of earth and heaven, they seem to sink from sight.

## IV.

But one, in seeming petulance, oppressed  
With heat has cast his brown young body free :  
With arms behind his head and heaving breast  
He lies and gazes at the cool bright sea ;

So young Leander might when in the noon  
He panted for the starry eyes of eve  
And whispered o'er the waste of wandering waves,  
"Hero, bid night come soon!"  
Nor knew the nymphs were waiting to receive  
And kiss his pale limbs in their cold sea-caves.

## v.

Now to their feet they leap and, with a shout,  
Plunge through the glittering breakers without fear,  
Breast the green-arching billows, and still out,  
As if each dreamed the arms of Hero near;  
Now like three sunbeams on an emerald crest,  
Now like three foam-flakes melting out of sight,  
They are blent with all the glory of all the sea;  
One with the golden West;  
Merged in a myriad waves of mystic light  
As life is lost in immortality.

## THE VENUS OF MILO.

## I.

BACKWARD she leans, as when the rose unblown  
 Slides white from its warm sheath some morn in  
 May!

Under the sloping waist, aslant, her zone  
 Clings as it slips in tender disarray ;  
 One knee, out-thrust a little, keeps it so  
 Lingerin ere it fall ; her lovely face  
 Gazes as o'er her own Eternity !

Those armless radiant shoulders, long ago  
 Perchance held arms out wide with yearning grace  
 For Adon by the blue Sicilian sea.

## II.

No ; thou eternal fount of these poor gleams,  
 Bright axle-star of the wheeling temporal skies,  
 Daughter of blood and foam and deathless dreams,  
 Mother of flying Love that never dies,

To thee, the topmost and consummate flower,  
The last harmonic height, our dull desires  
And our tired souls in dreary discord climb ;  
The flesh forgets its pale and wandering fires ;  
We gaze through heaven as from an ivory tower  
Shining upon the last dark shores of Time.

## III.

White culmination of the dreams of earth,  
Thy splendour beacons to a loftier goal,  
Where, slipping earthward from the great new birth,  
The shadowy senses leave the essential soul !  
Oh, naked loveliness, not yet revealed,  
A moment hence that falling robe will show  
No prophecy like this, this great new dawn,  
The bare bright breasts, each like a soft white shield,  
And the firm body like a slope of snow  
Out of the slipping dream-stuff half withdrawn.

## THE NET OF VULCAN.

FROM peaks that clove the heavens asunder  
The hunchback god with sooty claws  
Loomed o'er the night, a cloud of thunder,  
And hurled the net of mortal laws ;  
It flew, and all the world grew dimmer ;  
Its blackness blotted out the stars,  
Then fell across the rosy glimmer  
That told where Venus couched with Mars.

And, when the steeds that draw the morning  
Spurned from their Orient hooves the spray,  
All vainly soared the lavrock, warning  
Those tangled lovers of the day :  
Still with those twin white waves in blossom,  
Against the warrior's rock-broad breast,  
The netted light of the foam-born bosom  
Breathed like a sea at rest.

And light was all that followed after,  
Light the derision of the sky,  
Light the divine Olympian laughter  
Of kindlier gods in days gone by :  
Low to her lover whispered Venus,  
“The shameless net be praised for this—  
When night herself no more could screen us  
It snared us one more hour of bliss.”

## THE RIDE OF PHAËTHON.

## I.

FORTH, from the portals, flow the four immortal steeds  
Tossing the splendour of their manes,  
While the dazzled Phaëthon reels o'er the flashing  
golden wheels  
Grasping the fourfold reins.

## II.

Ah, beneath the burning hooves how the darkness  
covers down  
As the great steeds mount and soar ;  
How the twilight springs away from the wheels like  
spray  
And the night like a battle-broken host is driven  
before.



## III.

And swifter now, ah swift, as the eight great shoulders  
lift

And leap up the rolling sky,  
And the steeds in whitest glory ramp and trample on  
the night

And the quivering haunches thrust, they mount and  
fly.

## IV.

Ah, the beauty of their scorn! How the blood-red  
nostrils burn,

Breathing out the dawn and the day ;  
How the long cloud ranks foam in fury from their flanks,  
And the heavens for their hooves make way.

## V.

And higher now and higher, thro' a sea of cloudy fire  
The chariot sways and swings,  
And the heart of Phaëthon leaps, as up the radiant  
steps

They surge, and drunk with triumph, he lifts his head  
and sings.

## VI.

He sings, he sways and reels o'er the flashing golden  
wheels,  
For he sees far, far below,  
The little dwindling earth and the land that gave him  
birth  
And the Northlands white with snow.

## VII.

And he shakes the maddened reins o'er the gleaming  
seas and plains  
And the chariot swings and sways,  
Swifter, swifter he would fly than the Master of the sky,  
The Lord of the sunbeams and bays.

## VIII.

And each high immortal steed that had never known  
the need  
Of Apollo's lash or goad,  
Tossed the cataract of its mane o'er its quivering croup  
again  
And ramped on the sun-bright road.

## IX.

*Beautiful, insolent, fierce,  
For an instant, a whirlwind of radiance,  
Tossing their manes,  
Rampant over the dazzled universe  
They struggled, while Phaëthon, Phaëthon, tugged at the  
reins.*

## X.

Then, like a torrent, a tempest of splendour, a hurricane  
rapture of wrath and derision  
Down they galloped, a great white thunder of glory,  
down the terrible sky ;  
Till earth with her rivers and seas and meadows  
broadened and filled up the field of their vision,  
And mountains leapt from the plains to meet them,  
and all the forests and fields drew nigh.

## XI.

All the bracken and grass of the mountains flamed and  
the valleys of corn were wasted,  
All the blossoming forests of Africa withered and  
shrivelled beneath their flight ;

Then, then first, those ambrosial Edens of old by the  
wheels of the Sun were blasted,  
Leaving a dead Sahara, lonely, burnt and blackened  
to greet the night.

## XII.

Upward they swerved and swooped once more, the great  
white steeds, outstretched at a gallop,  
The round earth dwindled beneath their flight, the  
mighty chariot swayed and swung  
Under the feet of the charioteer, it swung and swayed  
as a storm-swept shallop  
Tosses and leaps in the seas, and Phaëthon, cowering,  
close to the sides of it clung.

## XIII.

For now to the stars, to the stars, they surged, and the  
earth was a dwindling gleam thereunder,  
Yea, now to the home of the Father of gods and he  
rose in the wrath that none can quell,  
Beholding the mortal charioteer, and the rolling heavens  
were rent with his thunder,  
And Phaëthon, smitten, reeled from the chariot! Back-  
ward and out of it, headlong, he fell.

## XIV.

Down, down, down, down from the glittering heights of  
the firmament hurled

Like a falling star, in a circle of fire, down the sheer  
abysm of doom,

Down to the hiss and the heave of the seas far out on  
the ultimate verge of the world,

That leapt with a roar to meet him, he fell and they  
covered him o'er with their glorious gloom,

Covered him deep with their rolling gloom,  
Their depths of pitiful gloom.

## NIOBE.

How like the sky she bends above her child,  
 One with the great horizon of her pain!  
 No sob from our low seas where woe runs wild,  
 No weeping cloud, no momentary rain,  
 Can mar the heaven-high visage of her grief,  
 That frozen anguish, proud, majestic, dumb!  
 She stoops in pity above the labouring earth,  
 Knowing how fond, how brief  
 Is all its hope, past, present, and to come,  
 She stoops in pity, and yearns to assuage its dearth.

Through that fair face the whole dark universe  
 Speaks, as a thorn-tree speaks thro' one white flower;  
 And all those wrenched Promethean souls that curse  
 The gods but cannot die before their hour,  
 Find utterance in her beauty. That fair head  
 Bows over all earth's graves. It was her cry  
 Men heard in Rama when the twisted ways  
 With children's blood ran red!  
 Her silence utters all the sea would sigh;  
 And, in her face, the whole earth's anguish prays.

It is the pity, the pity of human love  
That strains her face, upturned to meet the doom,  
And her deep bosom, like a snow-white dove  
Frozen upon its nest, ne'er to resume  
Its happy breathing o'er the golden brace  
Whose fostering was her death. Ay, death alone  
Can break the anguished horror of that spell!  
The sorrow on her face  
Is sealed: the living flesh is turned to stone;  
She knows all, all, that Life and Time can tell.

Ah, yet, her woman's love, so vast, so tender;  
Her woman's body, hurt by every dart;  
Braving the thunder, still, still hide the slender  
Soft frightened child beneath her mighty heart!  
She is all one mute immortal cry, one brief  
Infinite pang of such victorious pain  
That she transcends the heavens and bows them  
down!  
The majesty of grief  
Is hers, and her dominion must remain  
Eternal. God nor man usurps that crown.

## ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

## I.

CLOUD upon cloud, the purple pinewoods clung to the  
rich Arcadian mountains,

Holy-sweet as a column of incense, where Eurydice  
roamed and sung :

All the hues of the gates of heaven flashed from the  
white enchanted fountains

Where in the flowery glades of the forests the rivers  
that sing to Arcadia sprung.

White as a shining marble Dryad, supple and sweet as  
a rose in blossom,

Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew from the  
fern at break of day,

Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair that kissed  
and clung to her sun-bright bosom,

Down to the valley she came, and the sound of her  
feet was the bursting of flowers in May.



Down to the valley she came, for far and far below in  
the dreaming meadows

Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love by  
her golden name ;

So she arose from her home in the hills, and down through  
the blossoms that danced with their shadows,

Out of the blue of the dreaming distance, down to  
the heart of her lover she came.

. . . . .

Red were the lips that hovered above her lips in the  
flowery haze of the June-day :

Red as a rose through the perfumed mist of passion  
that reeled before her eyes ;

Strong the smooth young sunburnt arms that folded her  
heart to his heart in the noon-day,

Strong and supple with throbbing sunshine under the  
blinding southern skies.

Ah, the kisses, the little murmurs, mad with pain for  
their phantom fleetness,

Mad with pain for the passing of love that lives, they  
dreamed—as we dream—for an hour !

Ah, the sudden tempest of passion, mad with pain for  
its over-sweetness,

As petal by petal and pang by pang their love broke  
out into perfect flower.

Ah, the wonder as once he wakened, out of a dream of  
remembered blisses,  
Couched in the meadows of dreaming blossom to  
feel, like the touch of a flower on his eyes,  
Cool and fresh with the fragrant dews of dawn the  
touch of her light swift kisses,  
Shed from the shadowy rose of her face between his  
face and the warm blue skies.

## II.

Lost in his new desire  
He dreamed away the hours ;  
His lyre  
Lay buried in the flowers :

To whom the King of Heaven,  
Apollo, lord of light,  
Had given  
Such beauty, love, and might :

Might, if he would, to slay  
All evil dreams and pierce  
The grey  
Veil of the Universe ;

With Love that holds in one  
Sacred and ancient bond  
    The sun  
And all the vast beyond

And Beauty to enthrall  
The soul of man to heaven :  
    Yea, all  
Such gifts was Orpheus given.

*Yet in his dream's desire  
He drowsed away the hours :  
    His lyre  
Lay buried in the flowers.*

Then in his wrath arose  
Apollo, lord of light,  
    That shows  
The wrong deed from the right ;

And by what radiant laws  
O'erruling human needs,  
    The cause  
To consequence proceeds ;

How balanced is the sway  
He gives each mortal doom :  
    How day  
Demands the atoning gloom :

How all good things await  
The soul that pays the price  
    To Fate  
By equal sacrifice ;

And how on him that sleeps  
For less than labour's sake  
    There creeps,  
Uncharmed, the Pythian snake.

## III.

Lulled by the wash of the feathery grasses, a sea with  
    many a sun-swept billow,  
    Heart to heart in the heart of the summer, lover by  
    lover asleep they lay,  
Hearing only the whirring cicada that chirruped awhile  
    at their popped pillow  
    Faint and sweet as the murmur of men that laboured  
    in villages far away.

Was not the menace indeed more silent? Ah, what  
care for labour and sorrow?

Gods in the meadows of moly and amaranth surely  
might envy their deep sweet bed

Here where the butterflies troubled the lilies of peace,  
and took no thought for the morrow,

And golden-girdled bees made feast as over the  
lotos the soft sun spread.

Nearer, nearer the menace glided, out of the gorgeous  
gloom around them,

Out of the poppy-haunted shadows deep in the  
heart of the purple brake;

Till through the hush and the heat as they lay, and  
their own sweet listless dreams enwound them,—

Mailed and mottled with hues of the grape-bloom  
suddenly, quietly, glided the snake.

Subtle as jealousy, supple as falsehood, diamond-headed  
and cruel as pleasure,

Coil by coil he lengthened and glided, straight to  
the fragrant curve of her throat:

There in the print of the last of the kisses that still  
glowed red from the sweet long pressure,

Fierce as famine and swift as lightning over the  
glittering lyre he smote.

## IV.

And over the cold white body of love and delight  
Orpheus arose in the terrible storm of his grief,  
With quivering up-clutched hands, deadly and white,  
And his whole soul wavered and shook like a wind-  
swept leaf :

As a leaf that beats on a mountain, his spirit in  
vain  
Assaulted his doom and beat on the Gates of  
Death :  
Then prone with his arms o'er the lyre he sobbed  
out his pain,  
And the tense chords faintly gave voice to the  
pulse of his breath.

And he heard it and rose, once again, with the lyre  
in his hand,  
And smote out the cry that his white-lipped sorrow  
denied :  
And the grief's mad ecstasy swept o'er the summer-  
sweet land,  
And gathered the tears of all Time in the rush of  
its tide.

There was never a love forsaken or faith forsworn,  
There was never a cry for the living or moan for  
the slain,  
But was voiced in that great consummation of song ;  
ay, and borne  
To storm on the Gates of the land whence none  
cometh again.

Transcending the barriers of earth, comprehending them  
all,  
He followed the soul of his loss with the night in  
his eyes ;  
And the portals lay bare to him there ; and he heard  
the faint call  
Of his love o'er the rabble that wails by the river  
of sighs.

Yea, there in the mountains before him, he knew it  
of old,  
That portal enormous of gloom, he had seen it in  
dreams,  
When the secrets of Time and of Fate through his  
harmonies rolled ;  
And behind it he heard the dead moan by their  
desolate streams.

And he passed through the Gates with the light and  
the cloud of his song,

Dry-shod over Lethe he passed to the chasms of  
hell;

And the hosts of the dead made mock at him, crying,

*How long*

*Have we dwelt in the darkness, oh fool, and shall  
evermore dwell?*

*Did our lovers not love us?* the grey skulls hissed in  
his face;

*Were our lips not red? Were these cavernous eyes  
not bright?*

*Yet us, whom the soft flesh clothed with such roseate  
grace,*

*Our lovers would loathe if we ever returned to their  
sight!*

Oh then, through the soul of the Singer, a pity so  
vast

Mixed with his anguish that, smiting anew on his  
lyre,

He caught up the sorrows of hell in his utterance at  
last,

Comprehending the need of them all in his own  
great desire.



## v.

And they that were dead, in his radiant music, heard  
the moaning of doves in the olden

Golden-girdled purple pinewood, heard the moan  
of the roaming sea ;

Heard the chant of the soft-winged songsters, nesting  
now in the fragrant golden

Olden haunted blossoming bowers of lovers that  
wandered in Arcady ;

Saw the soft blue veils of shadow floating over the  
billowy grasses

Under the crisp white curling clouds that sailed  
and trailed through the melting blue ;

Heard once more the quarrel of lovers above them  
pass, as a lark-song passes,

Light and bright, till it vanished away in an eye-  
bright heaven of silvery dew.

White as a dream of Aphrodite, supple and sweet as  
a rose in blossom,

Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew from  
the fern at break of day ;

Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair, that  
kissed and clung to her sun-bright bosom,

On through the deserts of hell she came, and the  
brown air bloomed with the light of May.

On through the deserts of hell she came ; for over  
the fierce and frozen meadows  
Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love  
by her golden name ;  
So she arose from her grave in the darkness, and up  
through the wailing fires and shadows,  
On by chasm and cliff and cavern, out of the  
horrors of death she came.

Then had she followed him, then had he won her,  
striking a chord that should echo for ever,  
Had he been steadfast only a little, nor paused in  
the great transcendent song ;  
But ere they had won to the glory of day, he came  
to the brink of the flaming river  
And ceased, to look on his love a moment, a little  
moment, and over-long.

## VI.

O'er Phlegethon he stood :  
Below him roared and flamed  
The flood  
For utmost anguish named.

And lo, across the night,  
The shining form he knew  
    With light  
Swift footsteps upward drew.

Up through the desolate lands  
She stole, a ghostly star,  
    With hands  
Outstretched to him afar.

With arms outstretched, she came  
In yearning majesty,  
    The same  
Royal Eurydice.

Up through the ghastly dead  
She came, with shining eyes  
    And red  
Sweet lips of child-surprise.

Up through the wizened crowds  
She stole, as steals the moon  
    Through clouds  
Of flowery mist in June.

He gazed : he ceased to smite  
The golden-chorded lyre :

Delight

Consumed his heart with fire.

Though in that deadly land  
His task was but half-done,  
His hand  
Drooped, and the fight half-won.

He saw the breasts that glowed,  
The fragrant clouds of hair :

They flowed

Around him like a snare.

*O'er Phlegethon he stood,*

*For utmost anguish named :*

*The flood*

*Below him roared and flamed.*

Out of his hand the lyre  
Suddenly slipped and fell

The fire

Acclaimed it into hell.

The night grew dark again :  
There came a bitter cry  
    Of pain,  
*Oh Love, once more I die !*

And lo, the earth-dawn broke,  
And like a wraith she fled :  
    He woke  
Alone : his love was dead.

He woke on earth : the day  
Shone coldly : at his side  
    There lay  
The body of his bride.

## VII.

Only now when the purple vintage bubbles and winks  
    in the autumn glory,  
    Only now when the great white oxen drag the  
    weight of the harvest home,  
Sunburnt labourers, under the star of the sunset, sing  
    as an old-world story  
How two pale and thwarted lovers ever through  
    Arcady still must roam.

Faint as the silvery mists of morning over the peaks  
that the noonday parches,  
On through the haunts of the gloaming musk-rose,  
down to the rivers that glisten below,  
Ever they wander from meadow to pinewood, under  
the whispering woodbine arches,  
Faint as the mists of the dews of the dusk when  
violets dream and the moon-winds blow.

Though the golden lute of Orpheus gathered the  
splendours of earth and heaven,  
All the golden greenwood notes and all the chimes  
of the changing sea,  
Old men over the fires of winter murmur again that  
he was not given  
The steadfast heart divine to rule that infinite  
freedom of harmony.

Therefore he failed, say they; but we, that have no  
wisdom, can only remember  
How through the purple perfumed pinewoods white  
Eurydice roamed and sung:  
How through the whispering gold of the wheat, where  
the poppy burned like a crimson ember,  
Down to the valley in beauty she came, and under  
her feet the flowers upsprung.

*Down to the valley she came, for far and far below  
in the dreaming meadows*

*Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love by  
her golden name ;*

*So she arose from her home in the hills, and down  
through the blossoms that danced with their  
shadows,*

*Out of the blue of the dreaming distance, down to  
the heart of her lover she came.*

## EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES.

## I.

No more, proud singers, boast no more !  
 Your high immortal throne  
 Will scarce outlast a king's !  
 Time is a sea that hath no shore  
 Wherein Death idly flings  
 Your fame like some small pebble-stone  
 That sinks to rise no more.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,  
 Your high immortal throne !*

## II.

This earth, this little grain of dust  
 Drifting among the stars,  
 With her invisible wars,  
 Her love, her hate, her lust,



This microscopic ball  
Whereof you scan a part so small,  
Outlasts but little even your own poor dust.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,  
Your high immortal throne !*

## III.

That golden spark of light must die  
Which now you call your sun !  
Soon will its race be run  
Around its trivial sky !  
What hand shall then unroll  
Dead Maro's little golden scroll  
When earth and sun in one wide charnel lie.

*Then boast no more, proud singers !  
Your high immortal throne  
Will scarce outlast a king's !*

## THE LAST OF THE TITANS.

OVER what seemed a gulf of glimmering sea,  
 Huger than hugest Himalay, arose  
 Atlas, on weary shoulders heaving dark  
 The burden of the heavens, the heavy broad  
 Empurpled floors o' the roseate golden realm  
 Unseen, where gods like living light in light  
 Moved and forgot the sorrows of the world.  
 And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,  
 Bowed like a mountain, crushing on his breast  
 A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Dark,  
 Immeasurably dark his body's bulk  
 Sank thro' the gulfs of space ; but pale as death  
 His face gleamed over Africa, his face  
 A mask of living marble, bending down  
 Eyes like deep wells of soft compassionate gloom.  
 His cheeks were furrowed and writhen like rain-washed  
     crag  
 With fierce ravines of long and age-long tears  
 Whereon the pale procession of the stars

That round him moved in mockery sometimes cast  
A dreary light of anguish ; but sometimes  
The white clouds glimmering crept to comfort him  
And to be comforted, by shutting out  
The keen oppression of those glittering ranks  
And dread eternities. They crept like sheep  
Round some Titanic shepherd. In his breast  
They nestled ; but whene'er his mighty hands  
In love would draw them closer, they escaped,  
Eluded the fond clasp, as dreams, as dreams,  
And, ever drawing nigh him all night long,  
Wandered away for ever as they came.  
Beneath him, like a tawny panther-skin  
The great Sahara slept : beyond it lay  
Parcelled and plotted out like tiny fields  
The princedoms and the kingdoms of this earth,  
Mountains like frozen wrinkles on a sea,  
And seas like rain-pools in a rutted road  
Dwindling beneath his loneliness. Above  
The chariots of ten thousand thousand suns  
Conspired to make him lonelier and rolled  
Their flaming wheels remote, so that they seemed,  
E'en Alioth and Fomalhaut, no more  
Than dust of diamonds in the abysmal gloom.  
So from a huger loneliness he gazed  
Over the world where, faint as morning mists

Drifting thro' shadowy battles on the hills,  
Drifting thro' many a pageant touched with red,  
Cities of men and nations passed away.

But once, from out a crimson glooming dawn,  
A light appeared as of a distant star  
Flying towards him, growing as it came ;  
Till now it seemed a naked youth upborne  
On silver dove-winged sandals, like a god.  
Then, then as moans the thunder through the night  
The heart of Atlas moaned—"Why art thou come  
To look upon my sorrow? Nay, I know,  
Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods,  
I know thee who thou art! Why comest thou  
To mock me with the sight of that high hope  
Which Atlas never knew? Why comest thou thus  
In youth and beauty through the crimson dawn?"

And Perseus answered gently, as a man  
Speaking to one in pain: "I did not come  
To mock thee, lord. I come to seek and pluck  
The heart from out the land without a name,  
The land without any order, where the light  
Is even as darkness. I would seek and slay  
Medusa, her whose foul enchantments draw  
Man's heart into the abominable pit

Strangled and"—then that other—"Many a man,  
Yea, many a hero have I seen go by  
The glory of whose face was like a god's  
Upon that quest ; but I have never seen  
The face of one returning. Knowest thou not,  
So terrible is the tempest of her beauty  
That, if thine eyes but look upon her face,  
Thy flesh and soul shall stiffen into stone?  
Her breasts are girt about with triple brass  
Against all mortal steel." And Perseus—"Yea,  
I know ; but she—the brightest queen of heaven,  
Athena, gave me mine immortal sword,  
The sword of knowledge, that can shear through  
brass

And triple steel as lightning cleaves the night.  
Athena gave me mine immortal shield,  
The shield of truth ; and, mirrored in that gleam,  
The face of even Medusa hath no power  
To hurt me. I will look not on her face  
Save in the shield of truth. I shall not smite her  
Save with the sword of knowledge, bathed in heaven.  
I pray thee show me now that bitter road,  
My death-road as thou sayest, for I will go  
And triumph and return." And Atlas said,  
"Yea, if I show thee, Perseus, wilt thou give  
One grace on thy return, one gift of grace

To me world-wearied. I desire to rest ;  
I am weary of bearing this exceeding weight  
Of gloom eternal, weary of searching heaven  
With prayers for pity, weary of knowledge, weary  
Of watching little men, a little hour  
Beneath the pondering of prodigious heavens,  
Contend like ants for little molehill realms  
And glow-worm glories, crowns contemptible ;  
But thou canst give me peace—if thou return.  
Swear now ; and I will tell thee when thou comest ;  
But swear as thou dost love thy fatherland  
Thou'lt not deny me this." And Perseus took  
That oath ; and Atlas pointed out the road  
Across the shapeless land without a name.

White as a snow-flake on the weird black wings  
Of many a wind fulfilled with hideous dreams,  
Misshapen horrors of the ultimate gloom  
He flew, till as they gaped with threatening jaws  
Of flame around his path he donned the helm  
Wrung from the realms of Pluto, the dark helm  
Wrought in the lands of death, which whoso wears  
Is bodiless and invisible as the soul  
That hath gone over Lethe. Him no more  
Can death affright or mortal doom affray.

League after league he sped till from the depths  
Of nether darkness came a great soft sound  
Of breathing, like the breathing of the sea ;  
And, shuddering, he upheld the polished shield  
And gazed on it as on some magic moon  
Wherein he saw the glimmering world below  
Mirrored, beheld what none hath ever seen  
And lived, since the beginning of the world.  
“O, horrible,” he moaned, “O, beautiful,  
Beautiful hell” ; for in the shield he saw  
Upon what seemed a plain of steaming filth  
A Titan woman, lying supine and white,  
White as a fallen column of some huge  
Temple of Ombos, hugest city of earth ;  
Her body a field of lilies and her breasts  
Two snowy hillocks tipt with crimson dawn ;  
Her flank a marble buttress beautiful  
Couched in the foul abyss ; her regal face  
Calm with the leonine languor of the Sphinx.  
On either side, close huddled to her flank,  
Dimmed with the steam wherethrough she glimmered  
pale  
A dark shape, indistinguishable bulk  
Of horror, couched with laps and folds of skin  
Like those that wrap Behemoth ; and sometimes,

Like the fierce flashing of a wrecker's fire,  
There came a glint of brazen claws and wings.  
All round them like a forest swept the deep  
Empurpled masses of her tangled hair.  
Anon with slow and sleepy crimson lips,  
Bright as with blood of heroes, her face turned  
Smiling to greet each horror with a kiss ;  
And, as she turned, her beauty's palace heaved  
One rosy marble buttress from the filth  
Luxuriously a little : the other sank  
And wallowed deeper. Suddenly her eyes  
Opened in child-like innocence. The dark  
Mass of her hair shook round her like a sea,  
Its purple clouds all clotted and congealed,  
And lo, the primal serpents of the slime,  
Huger than Python, hissing, upward curled,  
And floated round her, coil on heavy coil,  
Beautiful in their horror as they cast  
Shadows like grape-bloom o'er her marble face  
And swayed their bloated throats. But at that sound  
Young Perseus gripped the bright immortal sword  
Which grave grey-eyed Athena gave him, gazed  
Steadfastly on the shield and floated down  
Quietly as a star-beam into hell.  
Then with one prayer to the everlasting gods,  
Across the roseate hollow of her throat



He smote! The immortal blade like light through  
darkness

Flashed, and the blood rolled hissing o'er the filth  
And, wheresoe'er it curled, a serpent rose  
Hissing agape. Then with one hideous clap  
Of thunder, those two monstrous bulks arose  
Mountainous, like two foul prodigious swine,  
From out their wallowing beds i' the clinging mire  
And from what seemed their eyes a ruddy light  
Of vengeance flashed, as of wild crimson torches  
Far-sunken in a thick and savage wood,  
Yet imminent; but Perseus, with one hand  
Clutching the tangled gloom of that dire head,  
Soared upward, and the silver sandals bore  
The hero and his burden far away.

And though with heavy clang of brazen wings  
The Gorgons followed, soon they dropped behind  
And loomed no larger than two carrion-flies  
Against the red horizon, and ere long  
Decayed from sight. And onward Perseus came  
Triumphantly, a light upon his face  
As of a god returning, till he saw  
The mighty shoulders of the world-worn king  
Atlas, above what seemed a glimmering sea.  
Then like a low deep thunder his last cry  
Burst from the Titan's lips, "O, art thou come,

Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods !  
My burden is wellnigh more than I can bear !  
Lift up the head and let me look upon it ! ”  
And up to the grim worn face, furrowed with tears,  
He sped, according to his vow, and raised  
The cold head of Medusa, which no man  
Had seen and lived ; and Atlas looked  
With weary hungering eyes upon her face.  
And in one breath he found his vast desire ;  
For lo, a granite sleep, an iron rest,  
An everlasting quiet sealed his eyes ;  
His face grew grayer and colder than the crags  
Of Caucasus : his eyes were turned to stone ;  
His cheeks were furrowed and writhen rain-washed  
crags,  
And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,  
A granite mountain, crushing on its breast  
A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Still  
Round him the clouds like wandering flocks of sheep  
Around some mighty shepherd creeping close  
Nestled against his breast ; and all was peace.

## FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.

“In our lands be Beeres and Lyons of dyvers colours as ye redd, grene, black, and white. And in our land be also unicornes and these Unicornes slee many Lyons. . . . Also there dare no man make a lye in our lande, for if he dyde he sholde incontynent be sleyn.”—*Mediæval Epistle of Pope Prester John.*

## I.

ACROSS the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we  
plodded,

Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,  
And we landed in the twilight where a Polyphemus  
nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow  
through the dark!

For his eye was growing mellow,  
Rich and ripe and red and yellow,

As was time, since old Ulysses made him bellow  
in the dark!

*Cho.*—Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a pine-  
torch in the dark!

## II.

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the giant's  
ugly shoulders

Just beneath the rolling eyeball, with its bleared  
and vinous glow,

Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines among  
the boulders

And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen slopes  
below,

*Were* they pines among the boulders

Or the hair upon his shoulders?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't  
know.

*Cho.*—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we  
couldn't know.

## III.

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came upon a  
fountain

Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of leaping  
fire;

And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath a golden  
mountain

There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to admire;

For a troop of ghosts came round us,  
Which with leaves of bay they crowned us,  
Then with grog they wellnigh drowned us, to the depth  
of our desire!

*Cho.*—And 'twas very friendly of them, as a sailor can  
admire!

## IV.

There was music all about us, we were growing quite  
forgetful

We were only singing seamen from the dirt of London-  
town,

Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to vanish  
half regretful

As if we wasn't good enough to take such vittles  
down,

When we saw a sudden figure,

Tall and black as any nigger,

Like the devil—only bigger—drawing near us with  
a frown!

*Cho.*—Like the devil—but much bigger—and he wore  
a golden crown!

## v.

And "what's all this?" he growls at us! With dignity  
we chaunted,

"Forty singing seamen, sir, as won't be put upon!"

"What? Englishmen?" he cries, "Well, if ye don't  
mind being haunted,

Faith, you're welcome to my palace; I'm the famous  
Prester John!

Will ye walk into my palace?

I don't bear 'ee any malice!

One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls of  
Prester John!"

*Cho.*—So we walked into the palace and the halls of  
Prester John!

## vi.

Now the door was one great diamond and the hall a  
hollow ruby—

Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay bigger by a half!

And I sees the mate wi' mouth agape, a-staring like a  
booby,

And the skipper close behind him, with his tongue  
out like a calf!

Now the way to take it rightly  
 Was to walk along politely  
 Just as if you didn't notice—so I couldn't help but  
 laugh!

*Cho.*—For they both forgot their manners and the crew  
 was bound to laugh!

## VII.

But he took us through his palace and, my lads, as  
 I'm a sinner,  
 We walked into an opal like a sunset-coloured  
 cloud—  
 “My dining-room,” he says, and, quick as light we saw  
 a dinner  
 Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden fairy  
 crowd;  
 And the skipper, swaying gently  
 After dinner, murmurs faintly,  
 “I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you've done us  
 very proud!”

*Cho.*—And we drank his health with honours, for he  
*done us very proud!*

## VIII.

Then he walks us to his garden where we sees a  
feathered demon

Very splendid and important on a sort of spicy tree!  
"That's the Phoenix," whispers Prester, "which all  
edicated seamen

Knows the only one existent, and *he's* waiting for  
to flee!

When his hundred years expire

Then he'll set hisself a-fire

And another from his ashes rise most beautiful to  
see!"

*Cho.*—With wings of rose and emerald most beautiful  
to see!

## IX.

Then he says, "In yonder forest there's a little silver  
river,

And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never  
die!

The centuries go by, but Prester John endures for ever

With his music in the mountains and his magic on  
the sky!



While *your* hearts are growing colder,  
While your world is growing older,  
There's a magic in the distance, where the sea-line  
meets the sky."

*Cho.*—It shall call to singing seamen till the fount o'  
song is dry!

## x.

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that forest fair  
defied us,—

First a crimson leopard laughs at us most horrible  
to see,

Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and licked his  
chops and eyed us,

While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing round a  
tree!

We was trying to look thinner,

Which was hard, because our dinner

Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o' high  
degree!

*Cho.*—Must ha' made us very tempting to the whole  
menarjeree!

## XI.

So we scuttled from that forest and across the poppy-  
 meadows  
 Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er us in  
 the dark !  
 And we pushes out from shore again a-jumping at our  
 shadows  
 And pulls away most joyful to the old black barque !  
 And home again we plodded  
 While the Polyphemus nodded  
 With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow  
 through the dark.  
*Cho.*—Oh, the moon above the mountains, red and  
 yellow through the dark !

## XII.

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town we  
 blundered,  
 Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to know  
 If the visions that we saw was caused by—here again  
 we pondered—  
 A tipple in a vision forty thousand years ago.

Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed  
Make us *dream* of all that followed?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't  
know!

*Cho.*—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we  
could not know!

## OLD JAPAN AT EARL'S COURT.

## I.

OF old Japan—how far away!—  
 We dreamed—how long ago!—  
 We saw by twisted creek and bay  
     The blue plum-blossoms blow,  
 And dragons coiling down below  
     Like dragons on a fan,  
 And pig-tailed sailors lurching slow  
     Thro' streets of old Japan.

## II.

Who knows that land—that dim blue day  
     Where white tea-roses grow?  
 Only a penny all the way  
     They cry in Pimlico:  
 The busses rumble to and fro,  
     Ah, catch one if you can,  
 And see the paper-lanterns glow  
     Thro' streets of old Japan.

## III.

What need we more than youth and May  
To make our Miyako?  
A chuckle from the cherry spray,  
A cherub's mocking crow,  
A sudden twang, a sweet swift throe  
As Daisy trips by Dan,  
And careless Cupid drops his bow  
And laughs—from old Japan.

## IV.

*And there the cherry bough shall sway,  
The peach-bloom shed its snow,  
With scents and petals strewn astray  
Till night be sweet enow:  
Then lovers wander, whispering low  
As lovers only can,  
Where rosy paper-lanterns glow  
Through streets of old Japan.*

## THE GOLDEN HYNDE.

*It was on July 25 that, with a boldness we can hardly realise, the course was laid. Their instruments for finding latitude were far from perfect; longitude it was practically impossible for them to determine at all; the variation of the compass was ascertained with childish crudeness. But straight across the Pacific (for sixty-eight days without sight of land) Drake pushed his way as it were by inspiration.*

## I.

WITH the fruit of Aladdin's garden clustering thick in  
her hold,  
With rubies a-wash in her scuppers and her bilge ablaze  
with gold,  
A world in arms behind her to sever her heart from  
home,  
The *Golden Hynde* drove onward, over the glittering  
foam.

## II.

If we go as we came by the Southward, we meet wi' the  
fleets of Spain!  
'Tis a thousand to one against us: we'll turn to the  
West again;

We have captured a China pilot, his charts and his  
golden keys ;  
We'll sail to the Golden Gateway, over the golden seas.

## III.

What shall we see as we sail there? Clusters of coral  
and palm,  
Oceans of silken slumber, measureless leagues of  
calm,  
Islands of purple story, lit with the westering gleam,  
Washed with the mystic whisper, dreaming the world-  
wide dream.

## IV.

There will be shores of sirens, with arms that beckon  
us near,  
As they stand knee-deep in the foam-flowers with peril-  
ous breasts and hair ;  
Sweet is the rest they proffer, yet what should we gain  
of these  
When we gaze on the Golden Gateway, that shines on  
the golden seas?

## V.

Wound in their white embraces, couched in the lustrous gloom,  
Gazing ever to seaward through the broad magnolia bloom,  
We should weary of all their kisses when, under the first white star,  
Over the limitless ocean, the Golden Gates unbar.

## VI.

White hands will strive to hold us ; but we must rise and go—  
Down to the salt sea-beaches where the waves are whispering low ;  
White arms will plead in anguish, as the sails fill out to the breeze,  
And we turn to the Golden Gateway that burns on the golden seas.

## VII.

We shall put out from shore then ; out to the Western skies,  
With the old despairing rapture and the sunset in our eyes :



What shall we gain of our going? What of the fading  
gleam,  
What of the gathering darkness, what of the dying  
dream?

## VIII.

Only the unknown glory, only the hope deferred,  
Only the wondrous whisper, only the unknown Word,  
Voice of the God that gave us billow and beam and  
breeze,  
As we sail to the Golden Gateway, over the golden  
seas.

## FROM THE SHORE.

Love, so strangely lost and found,  
Love, beyond the seas of death,  
Love, immortally re-crowned,  
Love, who swayest this mortal breath,  
Sweetlier to thy lover's ear  
Steals the tale that ne'er was told ;  
Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near,  
Nearer now than e'er of old.

When on earth thy hands were mine,  
Mine to hold for evermore,  
Oft we watched the sunset shine  
Lonely from this wave-beat shore ;  
Pent in prison-cells of clay,  
Time had power on thee and me :  
Thou and heaven are one to-day,  
One with earth and sky and sea ;

Indivisible and one !

Beauty hath unlocked the Gate,  
Oped the portals of the sun,  
Burst the bars of Time and Fate !  
Violets in the dawn of Spring  
Hold the secret of thine eyes :  
Lilies bare their breasts and fling  
Scents of thee from Paradise.

Brooklets have thy talk by rote ;  
Thy farewells array the West ;  
Fur that clasped thee round the throat  
Leaps—a squirrel—to its nest !  
Backward from a sparkling eye  
Half-forgotten jests return  
Where the rabbit lollops by  
Hurry-scurry through the fern !

Roses where I lonely pass  
Brush my brow and breathe thy kiss :  
Zephyrs, whispering through the grass,  
Lure me on from bliss to bliss :  
Here thy robe is rustling close,  
There thy fluttering lace is blown,—  
All the tide of beauty flows  
Tributary to thine own.

Birds that sleek their shining throats  
 Capture every curve from thee :  
 All their golden warbled notes,  
 Fragments of thy melody,  
 Crowding, clustering, one by one,  
 Build it upward, spray by spray,  
 Till the lavrock in the sun  
 Pours thy rapture down the day.

Silver birch and purple pine,  
 Crumpled fern and crimson rose,  
 Flash to feel their beauty thine,  
 Clasp and fold thee, warm and close :  
 Every beat and gleam of wings  
 Holds thee in its bosom furled ;  
 All that chatters, laughs, and sings,  
 Darts thy sparkle round the world.

*Love, so strangely lost and found,  
 Love, beyond the seas of death,  
 Love, immortally re-crowned,  
 Love, who swayest this mortal breath,  
 Sweetlier to thy lover's ear  
 Steals the tale that ne'er was told ;  
 Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near,  
 Nearer now than e'er of old.*

## THE RETURN.

O, HEDGES white with laughing may,  
O, meadows where we met,  
This heart of mine will break to-day  
Unless ye, too, forget.

Breathe not so sweet, breathe not so sweet,  
But swiftly let me pass  
Across the fields that felt her feet  
In the old time that was.

A year ago, but one brief year,  
O, happy flowering land,  
We wandered here and whispered there,  
And hand was warm in hand.

O, crisp white clouds beyond the hill,  
O, lavrock in the skies,  
Why do ye all remember still  
Her bright uplifted eyes.

Red heather on the windy moor,  
Wild thyme beside the way,  
White jasmine by the cottage door,  
Harden your hearts to-day.

Smile not so kind, smile not so kind,  
Thou happy haunted place,  
Or thou wilt strike these poor eyes blind  
With her remembered face.

*E TENEBRIS.*

INTO the keeping of death  
I commend my love,  
Into the gloom of the grave  
And the lasting sleep !  
Yet there is hope, one saith,  
In some glory above,  
For the broken, the broken wave  
That is lost in the deep.

O, I know not their meaning at all,  
They speak idly to me,  
Who say that the lost things return  
As day followeth night !  
I watch the leaves fall  
And waves break on the sea,  
And the strange skies that burn  
With the stranger day's light.

Shall I care if another day greet me  
    In crimson and gold,  
Though the skies be still blue,  
    When the eyes that were kind  
Flash no longer to meet me  
    As of old, as of old,  
With a love that was true,  
    Or a dream that was blind?

I have no hope, no faith,  
    No desire any more,  
That the last year's flower  
    Should return to the spray :  
Spring cometh, Spring cometh, one saith ;  
    But who shall restore  
Just the one perished hour  
    Of that one perished May?



## REMEMBRANCE.

O, UNFORGOTTEN lips, grey haunting eyes,  
Soft curving cheeks and heart-remembered brow,  
It is all true, the old love never dies ;  
And, parted, we must meet for ever now.

We did not think it true ! We did not think  
Love meant this universal cry of pain,  
This crown of thorn, this vinegar to drink,  
This lonely crucifixion o'er again.

Yet through the darkness of the sleepless night  
Your tortured face comes meekly answering mine ;  
Dumb, but I know why those mute lips are white ;  
Dark, but I know why those dark lashes shine.

O, love, love, love, and what if this should be  
For ever now, through God's Eternity ?

## A PRAYER.

ONLY a little, O Father, only to rest  
Or ever the night comes and the eternal sleep,  
Only to rest for a little, a little to weep  
In the dead love's pitiful arms, on the dead love's breast,

A little to loosen the frozen fountains, to free  
Rivers of blood and tears that should slacken the  
pulse  
Of this pitiless heart, and appease these pangs that  
convulse  
Body and soul ; oh, out of Eternity,

A moment to whisper, only a moment to tell  
My dead, my dead, what words are so helpless to  
say—  
The dreams unuttered, the prayers no passion could  
pray,  
And then—the eternal sleep or the pains of hell,

I could welcome them, Father, gladly as ever a child  
Laying his head on the pillow might turn to his rest  
And remember in dreams, as the hand of the mother  
is prest  
On his hair, how the Pitiful blessed him of old and  
smiled.

## HEINE'S DREAM.

IN dreams my lost love comes to me,  
In dreams, in dreams by night ;  
But her kiss is a yearning agony,  
Her face is wrung and white.

I feel the cold and quivering mouth  
Cleave as in long past years ;  
But O, the suffering and the drouth,  
And the salt strange tears !

Come no more, come no more,  
Often I wake and moan,  
While the heart of the sea on the distant shore  
Breaks in the dark, alone.

Why wilt thou tear the deep old wound  
    Open in sleep anew,  
O lips that I have kissed and found  
    So sweet and so untrue.

“Nay come, love, come in dreams to me,”  
    I turn and weep again :  
Thy far-off world misuseth thee,  
    Thou art in pain, in pain.

## EVE'S APPLE.

## I.

WHEN you leant thro' the leaves with your slow red  
smile and your ivory body bare,  
Ah, what was the fruit you gathered that day, white  
Eve with the dusky hair?

For we took it and ate it together and laughed! Your  
white teeth bit to the core.  
There was little to leave for the doves to peck, when  
our delicate feast was o'er.

## II.

The ripe fruit breathed of kisses, you said, as your  
breasts white apples may;  
But your body was cold from the coils of the snake  
when you came to my arms that day.

There was blood, red blood on our lips, white Eve,  
as we nibbled away in the sun;  
But I knew that the fruit was my heart, white Eve,  
The red rent core of my heart, white Eve,  
Which we gnawed and left for the rats, white Eve,  
when our delicate feast was done.

## THE REAL DANTE.

## I.

O LOVE, Love, Love, Death robbed me unaware,  
 Undreaming that we ne'er should meet again,  
 Else had one soul's infinity of pain  
 Moated thee round with waves for Hell to dare.  
 Yea, in that fight, even now, might I but share,  
 Poor craven I, who yet on earth remain,  
 Heaven, heaven itself should menace us in vain,  
 Thy heart on mine, my lips upon thine hair.

I have lost courage, Love, in losing thee,  
 Courage to bear this wonder of the sky,  
 Courage to front that dark Eternity,  
 Courage to brook life's pitiful riddle—*Why,*  
*Why hath God hurt us thus?* Poor broken cry  
 Quivering, unanswered, o'er the world's wide sea !



## II.

And thou art sleeping on that silent shore,  
And thou canst never, never once, return ;  
Not though the starved heart strain to thee and yearn,  
And the lame hands reach upward and implore,  
And the wrenched lips reiterate o'er and o'er  
One thought wherewith the pitiless planets burn,  
One lesson life is all too short to learn,  
One simple sob of the soul—"No more ! no more !"

My life shall never learn it, come thou back ;  
O, give the lie to all this dust hath said !  
Come ; let the stars retrace their shining track,  
Steal from that solemn midnight of the dead,  
Though as a dream thou canst but pass me by,  
Come, give my heart the strength to break and die.

## AN OLD SONG ENDED.

(A NEW VERSION.)

*How should I your true love know  
 From another one?—  
 By his cockle-hat and staff  
 And his sandal shoon.—*

Wherefore hath he roamed so far,  
 Lady, from your hand?—  
 Love's a pilgrim and he comes  
 Out of Holy Land.—

Nay, but he is dead, lady,  
 He is dead and gone!—  
 Seek his grave and lay your face  
 Down upon the stone.—

Shall I find him if he sleep  
In a nameless grave,  
Where over many and many an one  
The tall wet grasses wave?—

Breathe my name whereas you go :  
If you hear a sound  
Struggling like a stifled cry  
Underneath the ground,

Whisper but a word to him,  
Tell him my despair :  
If he riseth from the dead  
Then my love is there.

## LOVE'S GHOST.

## I.

THY house is dark and still : I stand once more  
Beside the marble door.  
It opens as of old : thy pale, pale face  
Peers thro' the narrow space :  
Thy hands are mine, thy hands are mine to hold,  
Just as of old.

## II.

"Hush ! hush ! or God will hear us ! Ah, speak low  
As Love spake long ago."  
"Sweet, sweet, are these thine arms, thy breast, thy hair  
Assuaging my despair,  
Assuaging the long thirst, quenching the tears  
Of all these years ?

## III.

"Thy house is deep and still : God cannot hear ;  
     Sweet, have no fear !  
 Are not thy cold lips crushed against my kiss ?  
     Love gives us this,  
 Not God ;" but " ah," she moans, " God hears us ; speak,  
     Speak low, hide cheek on cheek."

## IV.

Oh then what eager whisperings, hoarded long,  
     Sweeter than any song,  
 What treasured news to tell, what hopes, what fears,  
     Gleaned from the barren years,  
 What raptures wrung from out the heart of pain,  
     What wild farewells again !

## V.

Whose pity is this ? Ah, quick, one kiss ! Once more  
     Closes the marble door !  
 I grope here in the darkness all alone  
     Across the cold white stone,  
 Over thy tomb, a sudden starlight gleams :  
     Death gave me this—in dreams.

## ON A RAILWAY PLATFORM.

A DRIZZLE of drifting rain  
And a blurred white lamp o'erhead,  
That shines as my love will shine again  
In the world of the dead.

Round me the wet black night,  
And, afar in the limitless gloom,  
Crimson and green, two blossoms of light,  
Two stars of doom.

But the night of death is aflare  
With a torch of back-blown fire,  
And the coal-black deeps of the quivering air  
Rend for my soul's desire.

Leap, heart, for the pulse and the roar  
And the lights of the streaming train  
That leaps with the heart of thy love once more  
Out of the mist and the rain.

Out of the desolate years  
The thundering pageant flows ;  
But I see no more than a window of tears  
Which her face has turned to a rose.

## OXFORD REVISITED.

TIMID and strange, like a ghost, I pass the familiar  
portals,  
Echoing now like a tomb, they accept me no more  
as of old ;  
Yet I go wistfully onward, a shade thro' a kingdom of  
mortals  
Wanting a face to greet me, a hand to grasp and to  
hold.

Hardly I know as I go if the beautiful City is only  
Mocking me under the moon, with its streams and  
its willows a gleam,  
Whether the City of friends or I that am friendless and  
lonely,  
Whether the boys that go by or the time-worn towers  
be the dream ;



Whether the walls that I know, or the unknown fugitive  
faces,  
Faces like those that I loved, faces that haunt and  
waylay,  
Faces so like and unlike, in the dim unforgettable  
places,  
Startling the heart into sickness that aches with the  
sweet of the May,—

Whether all these or the world with its wars be the  
wandering shadows!  
Ah, sweet over green-gloomed waters the may hangs,  
crimson and white;  
And quiet canoes creep down by the warm gold dusk of  
the meadows,  
Lapping with little splashes and ripples of silvery  
light.

Others like me have returned: I shall see the old faces  
to-morrow,  
Down by the gay-coloured barges, alert for the throb  
of the oars,  
Wanting to row once again, or tenderly jesting with  
sorrow  
Up the old stairways and noting the strange new  
names on the doors.

Is it a dream? And I know not nor care if there be  
an awaking

Ever at all any more, for the years that have torn  
us apart,

Few, so few as they are, will ever be rending and  
breaking :

Sooner by far than I knew have they wrought this  
change for my heart !

Well ; I grow used to it now ! Could the dream but  
remain and for ever,

With the flowers round the grey quadrangle laughing  
as time grows old !

For the waters go down to the sea, but the sky still  
gleams on the river !

We plucked them—but there shall be lilies, ivory  
lilies and gold.

And still, in the beautiful City, the river of life is no  
duller,

Only a little strange as the eighth hour dreamily  
chimes,

In the City of friends and echoes, ribbons and music  
and colour,

Lilac and blossoming chestnut, willows and whispering  
limes.

Over the Radcliffe Dome the moon as the ghost of a  
flower

Weary and white awakes in the phantom fields of the  
sky :

The trustful shepherded clouds are asleep over steeple  
and tower,

Dark under Magdalen walls the Cher like a dream  
goes by.

Back, we come wandering back, poor ghosts, to the  
home that one misses

Out in the shelterless world, the world that was  
heaven to us then,

Back from the coil and the vastness, the stars and the  
boundless abysses,

Like monks from a pilgrimage stealing in bliss to  
their cloisters again.

City of dreams that we lost, accept now the gift we  
inherit—

Love, such a love as we knew not of old in the blaze  
of our noon,

We that have found thee at last, half City, half heavenly  
Spirit,

While over a mist of spires the sunset mellows the  
moon.

## THE THREE SHIPS.

*(To an old Tune.)*

## I.

As I went up the mountain-side,  
The sea below me glittered wide,  
And, Eastward, far away, I spied  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
The three great ships that take the tide  
    On Christmas Day in the morning.

## II.

Ye have heard the song, how these must ply  
From the harbours of home to the ports o' the sky!  
Do ye dream none knoweth the whither and why  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
The three great ships go sailing by  
    On Christmas Day in the morning?

## III.

Yet, as I live, I never knew  
That ever a song could ring so true,  
Till I saw them break thro' a haze of blue  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day ;  
And the marvellous ancient flags they flew  
    On Christmas Day in the morning !

## IV.

From the heights above the belfried town  
I saw that the sails were patched and brown,  
But the flags were a-flame with a great renown  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
And on every mast was a golden crown  
    On Christmas Day in the morning.

## V.

Most marvellous ancient ships were these !  
Were their prows a-plunge to the Chersonese ?  
For the pomp of Rome or the glory of Greece,  
    On Christmas day, on Christmas Day,  
Were they out on a quest for the Golden Fleece  
    On Christmas Day in the morning ?

## VI.

And the sun and the wind they told me there  
How goodly a load the three ships bear,  
For the first is gold and the second is myrrh  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day ;  
And the third is frankincense most rare  
    On Christmas Day in the morning.

## VII.

They have mixed their shrouds with the golden sky,  
They have faded away where the last dreams die . . .  
Ah yet, will ye watch, when the mist lifts high  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day ?  
Will ye see three ships come sailing by  
    On Christmas Day in the morning ?

## SLUMBER-SONGS OF THE MADONNA.

*PRELUDE.*

DANTE saw the great white Rose  
 Half unclose ;  
 Dante saw the golden bees  
 Gathering from its heart of gold  
 Sweets untold,  
 Love's most honeyed harmonies.

Dante saw the threefold bow  
 Strangely glow,  
 Saw the Rainbow Vision rise,  
 And the Flame that wore the crown  
 Bending down  
 O'er the flowers of Paradise.

Something yet remained, it seems ;  
 In his dreams  
 Dante missed—as angels may  
 In their white and burning bliss—  
 Some small kiss  
 Mortals meet with every day.

Italy in splendour faints  
 'Neath her saints !

O, her great Madonnas, too,  
 Faces calm as any moon  
     Glows in June,  
 Hooded with the night's deep blue !

What remains ? I pass and hear  
     Everywhere,  
 Ay, or see in silent eyes  
     Just the song she still would sing  
     Thus—a-swing  
 O'er the cradle where He lies.

## I.

Sleep, little baby, I love thee ;  
 Sleep, little king, I am bending above thee !  
     How should I know what to sing  
 Here in my arms as I swing thee to sleep ?  
     Hushaby low,  
     Rockaby so,  
 Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,  
 Mother has only a kiss for her king !  
 Why should my singing so make me to weep ?  
 Only I know that I love thee, I love thee,  
     Love thee, my little one, sleep.

## II.

Is it a dream ? Ah yet, it seems  
 Not the same as other dreams !



I can but think that angels sang,  
 When thou wast born, in the starry sky,  
 And that their golden harps out-rang  
 While the silver clouds went by !

The morning sun shuts out the stars,  
 Which are much loftier than the sun ;  
 But, could we burst our prison-bars  
 And find the Light whence light begun,  
 The dreams that heralded thy birth  
 Were truer than the truths of earth ;  
 And, by that far immortal Gleam,  
 Soul of my soul, I still would dream !

A ring of light was round thy head,  
 The great-eyed oxen nigh thy bed  
 Their cold and innocent noses bowed !  
 Their sweet breath rose like an incense cloud  
 In the blurred and mystic lanthorn light !

About the middle of the night  
 The black door blazed like some great star  
 With a glory from afar,  
 Or like some mighty chrysolite  
 Wherein an angel stood with white

Blinding arrowy bladed wings  
 Before the throne of the King of kings ;  
 And, through it, I could dimly see  
 A great steed tethered to a tree.

Then, with crimson gems aflame  
 Through the door the three kings came,  
 And the black Ethiop unrolled  
 The richly broidered cloth of gold,  
 And pourèd forth before thee there  
 Gold and frankincense and myrrh !

## III.

See, what a wonderful smile ! Does it mean  
 That my little one knows of my love ?  
 Was it meant for an angel that passed unseen,  
 And smiled at us both from above ?  
 Does it mean that he knows of the birds and the  
 flowers  
 That are waiting to sweeten his childhood's hours,  
 And the tales I shall tell and the games he will play,  
 And the songs we shall sing and the prayers we  
 shall pray  
 In his boyhood's May,  
 He and I, one day ?

## IV.

For in the warm blue summer weather  
We shall laugh and love together :  
    I shall watch my baby growing,  
I shall guide his feet,  
    When the orange trees are blowing  
And the winds are heavy and sweet !  
    When the orange orchards whiten  
I shall see his great eyes brighten  
To watch the long-legged camels going  
    Up the twisted street,  
When the orange trees are blowing  
    And the winds are sweet.

*What does it mean? Indeed, it seems  
A dream! Yet not like other dreams!*

We shall walk in pleasant vales,  
    Listening to the shepherd's song  
I shall tell him lovely tales  
    All day long :  
He shall laugh while mother sings  
Tales of fishermen and kings.

He shall see them come and go  
 O'er the wistful sea,  
 Where rosy oleanders blow  
 Round blue Lake Galilee,  
 Kings with fishers' ragged coats  
 And silver nets across their boats,  
 Dipping through the starry glow,  
 With crowns for him and me !  
                   Ah, no ;  
 Crowns for him, not me !

*Rockaby so ! Indeed, it seems  
 A dream ! yet not like other dreams !*

## v.

Ah, see what a wonderful smile again !  
 Shall I hide it away in my heart,  
 To remember one day in a world of pain  
           When the years have torn us apart,  
                   Little babe,  
 When the years have torn us apart ?  
  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep,  
           Child with the wonderful eyes,  
           Wild miraculous eyes,  
 Deep as the skies are deep !

What star-bright glory of tears  
 Waits in you now for the years  
 That shall bid you waken and weep?  
 Ah, in that day, could I kiss you to sleep  
 Then, little lips, little eyes,  
 Little lips that are lovely and wise,  
 Little lips that are dreadful and wise!

## VI.

Clenched little hands like crumpled roses  
     Dimpled and dear,  
 Feet like flowers that the dawn uncloses,  
     What do I fear?  
 Little hands, will you ever be clenched in anguish?  
 White little limbs, will you droop and languish?  
     Nay, what do I hear?  
 I hear a shouting, far away,  
 You shall ride on a kingly palm-strewn way  
     Some day!

But when you are crowned with a golden crown  
     And throned on a golden throne,  
 You'll forget the manger of Bethlehem town  
     And your mother that sits alone

Wondering whether the mighty king  
 Remembers a song she used to sing,  
     Long ago,  
     “*Rockaby so,*  
*Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,*  
*Mother has only a kiss for her king!*” . . .

Ah, see what a wonderful smile, once more!  
     He opens his great dark eyes!  
 Little child, little king, nay, hush, it is o'er,  
     My fear of those deep twin skies,—  
     Little child,  
     You are all too dreadful and wise!

## VII.

But now you are mine, all mine,  
     And your feet can lie in my hand so small,  
 And your tiny hands in my heart can twine,  
     And you cannot walk, so you never shall fall,  
 Or be pierced by the thorns beside the door,  
 Or the nails that lie upon Joseph's floor;  
 Through sun and rain, through shadow and shine,  
     You are mine, all mine!

THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY  
LIGHT.

THERE is a valley of fir-woods in the West  
That slopes between great mountains to the sea.  
Once, at the valley's mouth, a cottage stood :  
Its ruins remain, like boulders of a rock,  
High on the hill, whose base is white with foam.  
To its forsaken garden sometimes come  
Lovers, who lean upon its grass-grown gate  
And listen to the sea-song far below ;  
Or little children, with their baskets, trip  
Merrily through the fir-woods and the fern,  
And climb the crumbling thistle-empurpled wall  
Around the tangled copse, and laugh to find  
The hardy straggling raspberries all their own.

Round it the curlews wheel and cry all night ;  
And, with no other comfort than the stars  
Can faintly shed from their familiar heights

It has been patient, while the world below  
Has hidden itself in darkness and in clouds  
Of terror from the landward-rushing storm.  
Like a small gleam of quartz in a great rock,  
A tiny beacon in the whirling gloom,  
It stood and gathered sorrow from the world.

There, many years ago, a woman dwelt,  
A sailor's widow with her only son ;  
And ever as she hugged him to her heart  
In those glad days when he was but a child,  
Her memories of one black eternal night  
When she had watched and waited for the sail  
That nevermore returned, filled her with one  
Supreme, almost unbreathable, desire  
That this her little one, her living bliss,  
The last caress incarnate of her love,  
Should never leave her side ; or, if he left,  
Never set forth upon the sea : her flesh  
Shuddered as the sea shuddered in the sun  
Over the cold grave of her first last love  
Even to dream of it ; yet she remained  
Silent and passive on her sea-washed hill,  
Facing the sunset, in that lonely home,  
Where everything bore witness to the sea,—  
The shells her love had brought from foreign lands,



The model ship he built ; yet she remained.  
 For her first kisses lingered in the scent  
 Of those rough wallflowers round the whitewashed walls,  
 And the first flush of love that touched her cheek  
 Lingered and lived and died and lived again  
 In the pink thrift that nodded by the gate.  
 As if these and her outlook o'er the sea  
 Were nought else but her soul's one atmosphere,  
 Wherein alone she lived and moved and breathed,  
 Having no other thought but *This is home,*  
*My part in God's eternity,* she still  
 Remained. The lad grew ; yet her fear was dumb.

The lad grew, and the white foam kissed his feet  
 Sporting upon the verge : the green waves laughed  
 And smote their hard bright kisses on his lips  
 As he swam out to meet them : the whole sea,  
 Like some strange symbol of the spiritual deeps  
 That hourly lure the soul of man in quest  
 Of beauty, pleasure, knowledge, summoned him out,  
 Out from the old faiths, the old fostering arms of home,  
 Called him with strange new voices evermore,  
 Called him with ringing names of high renown,  
 With white-armed sirens in its blossoming waves,  
 And heavenly cities in its westering suns ;  
 Called him ; and old adventures filled his heart,

And he forgot, as all of us forget,  
 The imperishable and infinite desire  
 Of the vacant arms and bosom that still yearn  
 For the little vanished children, still, still ache  
 To keep their children little! He grew wroth  
 At aught that savoured of such fostering care  
 As mothers long to lavish, aught that seemed  
 To rob him of his manhood, his free-will:  
 And she—she understood and she was dumb.

And so the lad grew up; and he was tall,  
 Supple, and sunburnt, and a flower of men.  
 His eyes had caught the blue of sea-washed skies,  
 And deepened with strange manhood, till, at last,  
 One eve in May his mother wandered down  
 The hill to await his coming, wistfully  
 Wandered, touching with vague and dreaming hands  
 The uncrumpling fronds of fern and budding roses  
 As if she thought them but the ghosts of spring.  
 From far below the golden breezes brought  
 A mellow music from the village church,  
 Which o'er the fragrant fir-wood she could see  
 Pointing a sky-blue spire to heaven: she knew  
 That music, her most heart-remembered song—

*“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,  
 It is not night if Thou be near!”*

And as the music made her one with all  
That soft transfigured world of eventide,  
One with the flame that sanctified the West,  
One with the golden sabbath of the sea,  
One with the sweet responses of the woods,  
One with the kneeling mountains, there she saw  
In a tangle of ferns and roses and wild light  
Shot from the sunset through a glade of fir,  
Her boy and some young rival in his arms,  
A girl of seventeen summers, dusky-haired,  
Grey-eyed, and breasted like a crescent moon,  
Lifting her red lips in a dream of love  
Up to the red lips of her only son.  
Jealousy numbed the mother's lonely soul,  
And, sickening at the heart, she stole away.

Yet she said nothing when her boy returned ;  
And, after supper, she took down the Book,  
Her own dead grandsire's massive wedding-gift,  
The large-print Bible, like a corner-stone  
Hewn from the solemn fabric of his life—  
An heirloom for the guidance of his sons  
And their sons' sons ; and every night her boy  
Read it aloud to her—a last fond link  
Frayed and nigh snapt already, for she knew  
It irked him. And he read, *Abide with us*,

*For the day is far spent ;* and she looked at him  
Shyly, furtively. With great tears she gazed  
As on a stranger in her child's new face.

At last he told her all—told of his love,  
And how he must grow wealthy now and make  
A home for his young sweetheart, how he meant  
To work upon a neighbour's fishing-boat  
Till he could buy one for himself. He ceased ;  
Far off the sea sighed and a curlew wailed ;  
A soft breeze brought a puff of wallflower scent  
Warm through the casement. He looked up and  
smiled

Into his mother's face, and saw the tears  
Creep through the gnarled old hands that hid her eyes.  
He saw the star-light glisten on her tears !  
He could not understand : her lips were dumb.

Oh, dumb and patient as our mother Earth  
Watching from age to age the silent, swift,  
Light-hearted progress of her careless sons  
By new-old ways to one unaltering doom,  
Through the long nights she waited as of old  
Till in the dawn—and coloured like the dawn—  
The tawny sails came home across the bar.  
And every night she placed a little lamp

In the cottage window, that if e'er he gazed  
 Homeward by night across the heaving sea  
 He might be touched to memory. But she said  
 Nothing. The lamp was like the liquid light  
 In some dumb creature's eyes, that can but wait  
 Until its master chance to see its love  
 And deign to touch its brow.

Now in those days

There went a preacher through the country-side  
 Filling men's hearts with fire ; and out at sea  
 The sailors sang great hymns to God ; and one  
 Stood up one night, among the gleaming nets  
 Astream with silver herring in the moon,  
 And pointed to the lamp that burned afar  
 And said, "Such is that *Kindly Light* we sing!"  
 And ever afterwards the widow's house  
 Was called *The Cottage of the Kindly Light*.

One night there came a storm up from the wild  
 Atlantic, and a cry of fierce despair  
 Rang through the fishing-village ; and brave men  
 Launched the frail lifeboat through a shawl-clad crowd  
 Of weeping women. But, high o'er the storm,  
 High on the hill one lonely woman stood,  
 Amongst the thunders and the driving clouds,  
 Searching, at every world-wide lightning glare,

The sudden miles of white stampeding sea  
 Searching for what she knew was lost, ay lost  
 For ever now ; but some strange inward pride  
 Forbade her to go down and mix with those  
 Who could cry out their loss upon the quays.  
 High on the hill she stood and watched alone,  
 Confessing nothing, acknowledging nothing,  
 Without one moan, without one outward prayer,  
 Buffeted by the scornful universe,  
 Over the crash of seas that shook the world  
 She stood, one steadfast fragment of the night ;  
 And the wind kissed her and the weeping rain.

\* \* \* \* \*

But braver men than those who fought the sea  
 At dawn tramped up the hill, with aching hearts,  
 To break her loss to her who knew it all  
 Far better than the best of them. She stood  
 Still at her gate and watched them as they came,  
 Curiously noting in a strange dull dream  
 The gleaming colours, the little rainbow pools  
 The dawn made in their rough wet oilskin hats  
 And wrinkled coats, like patches of the sea.

“Lost? My boy lost?” she smiled. “Nay, he will  
 come!

To-morrow, or the next day, or the next  
 The Kindly Light will bring him home again."  
 And so, whate'er they answered, she would say—  
 "The Kindly Light will bring him home again";  
 Until, at last, thinking her dazed with grief,  
 They gently turned and went.

She had not wept.

And ere that week was over, came the girl  
 Her boy had loved. With tears and a white face  
 And garbed in black she came; and when she neared  
 The gate, his mother, proud and white with scorn,  
 Bade her return and put away that garb  
 Of mourning: and the girl saw, shrinking back,  
 The boy's own mother wore no sign of grief,  
 But all in white she stood; and like a flash  
 The girl thought, "God, she wears her wedding-dress!  
 Her grief has made her mad!"

And all that year

The widow lit the little Kindly Light  
 And placed it in the window. All that year  
 She watched and waited for her boy's return  
 At dawn from the high hill-top: all that year  
 She went in white, though through the village streets  
 Far, far below, the women went in black;

For all had lost some man ; but all that year  
 She said to her friends and neighbours, " He will  
     come ;

He is delayed ; some ship has picked him up  
 And borne him out to some far-distant land !  
 Why should I mourn the living ? " And, at dusk,  
 As if it were indeed the Kindly Light  
 Of faith and hope and love, she lit the lamp  
 And placed it in the window.

The year passed ;

And on an eve in May her boy's love climbed  
 The hill once more, and as the stars came out  
 And the dusk gathered round her tenderly,  
 And the last boats came stealing o'er the bar,  
 And the immeasurable sea lay bright and bare  
 And beautiful to all infinity  
 Beneath the last faint colours of the sun  
 And the increasing kisses of the moon,  
 A hymn came on a waft of evening wind  
 Along the valley from the village church  
 And thrilled her with a new significance  
 Unfelt before. It was the hymn they heard  
 On that sweet night among the rose-lit fern—  
*Sun of my soul* ; and, as she climbed the hill,  
 She wondered, for she saw no Kindly Light  
 Glimmering from the window ; and she thought



“ Perhaps the madness leaves her.” There the hymn,  
Like one great upward flight of angels, rose  
All round her, mingling with the sea’s own voice—

*“ Come near and bless us when we wake,  
Ere through the world our way we take,—  
Till, in the ocean of Thy love,  
We lose ourselves in heaven above.”*

And when she passed the pink thrift by the gate,  
And the rough wallflowers by the whitewashed wall,  
And entered, she beheld the widow kneeling,  
In black, beside the unlit Kindly Light ;  
And near her dead cold hand upon the floor  
A fallen taper, for with her last strength  
She had striven to light it and, so failing, died.

## IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING.

## I.

IN the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers  
waken,  
When the labourers turn them homeward, and the  
weary have their will,  
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-aisles are  
shaken,  
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

## II.

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander  
through the heather,  
Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the dewy fern ;  
They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer  
together,  
And fill the shaken pools with fire along the shadowy  
burn.

III.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He  
loveth,  
They have veiled His lovely vesture with the darkness  
of a name !  
Thro' His Garden, thro' His Garden it is but the wind  
that moveth,  
No more ; but O, the miracle, the miracle is the  
same !

IV.

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story  
Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved with  
passion still,  
Hush! . . . the fringes of His garment, in the fading  
golden glory,  
Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill.

## A ROUNDHEAD'S RALLYING SONG.

## I.

How beautiful is the battle,  
    How splendid are the spears,  
When our banner is the sky  
And our watchword *Liberty*,  
    And our kingdom lifted high above the years.

## II.

How purple shall our blood be,  
    How glorious our scars,  
When we lie there in the night  
With our faces full of light  
    And the death upon them smiling at the stars.

III.

How golden is our hauberk,  
And steel, and steel our sword,  
And our shield without a stain  
As we take the field again,  
We whose armour is the armour of the Lord !

## THE ANSWER.

DO YE BELIEVE? We never wrote  
 For fools at ease to know  
 The doubt that grips us by the throat,  
 The faith that lurks below ;  
 But we have stood beside our dead,  
 And, in that hour of need,  
 One tear the Man of Sorrows shed  
 Was more than any creed.

*Do ye believe?*—from age to age  
 The little thinkers cry ;  
 And rhymesters ape the puling sage  
 In pride of artistry.  
 Did Joshua stay a sun that rolls  
 Around a central earth?—  
 Our modern men have modern souls  
 And formulate their mirth.

But, while they laugh, from shore to shore  
From sea to moaning sea,  
*Eloi, Eloi*, goes up once more  
*Lama sabacthani!*

The heavens are like a scroll unfurled,  
The writing flames above—  
This is the King of all the world  
Upon his Cross of Love!

His members marred with wounds are we  
In whom the spirit strives,  
One Body of one Mystery,  
One Life in many lives :  
Darkly as in a glass we see  
The mystic glories glow,  
Nor shrink from God's Infinity  
Incarnate here below!

In flower and dust, in chaff and grain,  
He binds Himself and dies,  
We live by His eternal pain,  
His hourly sacrifice ;  
The limits of our mortal life  
Are his : the whisper thrills  
Under the sea's perpetual strife  
And through the sunburnt hills.

Seek ; ye shall find each flower on earth  
    A gateway to My heart,  
Whose Life has brought each leaf to birth ;  
    The whole is in the part !  
So to My sufferers have ye given  
    What help or hope may be ;  
Oh then, through earth, through hell, through heaven,  
    Ye did it unto Me !

Darkly, as in a glass, our sight  
    Still gropes through Time and Space :  
We cannot see the Light of Light  
    With angels, face to face ;  
Only the tale His martyrs tell  
    Around the dark earth rings—  
He died and He went down to hell  
    And lives—the King of kings !

*Do ye believe ?* On every side  
    Great hints of Him go by :  
Souls that are hourly crucified  
    On some new Calvary !  
Oh, tortured faces, white and meek,  
    Half seen amidst the crowd,  
Grey suffering lips that never speak,  
    The Glory in the Cloud !



*Do ye believe?* The straws that dance  
Far down the dusty road  
Mean little to the careless glance  
By careless eyes bestowed,  
Till full into your face the wind  
Smites, and the laugh is dumb ;  
And, from the rending heavens behind,  
Christ answers—*Lo, I come.*

## CREDO.

THOU that art throned so far above  
All earthly names, e'en those we deem  
Eternal, e'en that name of Love  
Which—as one speaketh in a dream—  
We whisper, ere the morning breaks,  
And the hands yearn, and the heart aches,

O, Thou that reignest, whom of old  
Men sought to appease by praise or prayer,  
The spirit's little gifts of gold,  
The soul's faint frankincense and myrrh,  
Though we the sons of deeper days  
Can bring thee neither prayer nor praise,

We have not turned in doubt aside  
Nor mocked with our ephemeral breath  
The little creeds that man's poor pride  
Still fashions in these gulfs of death,  
The little creeds that only prove  
Thou art so far, so far above,

So far beyond all Space and Time,  
So infinitely far, that none  
Though by ten thousand heavens he climb  
Higher, shall yet be higher by one,  
So far that—whelmed with light—we dare,  
Father, to know that Thou art here.

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